# The Art of Ancient EGYPT

A RESOURCE FOR EDUCATORS

**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**

**The Metropolitan Museum of Art's teacher training programs and accompanying materials are made possible through a generous grant from Mr. and Mrs. Frederick P. Rose.**



# Welcome

The Metropolitan Museum takes delight in providing educational programs for the general public and especially for teachers and their students. We are pleased to offer this comprehensive resource, which contains texts, posters, slides, and other materials about outstanding works of Egyptian art from the Museum's collection.

The texts draw upon the truly impressive depth of knowledge of the curators in our Department of Egyptian Art, especially Dorothea Arnold, James Allen, Catharine H. Roehrig, and Marsha Hill. Included are background information, descriptions of the specific objects, illustrations that can be photocopied, suggested classroom activities, and lesson plans.

These materials have been assembled by Edith Watts, associate Museum educator, and her colleagues to bring Egyptian art into the classroom, library, or other learning environment. They are designed to increase your knowledge and pleasure in viewing Egyptian art at the Metropolitan or other museum, whether it be for the first time or upon a return visit.

This is the first in a projected series of educators' resources supported by a generous grant from Mr. and Mrs. Frederick P. Rose, who share our dedication to making the unique educational resources of The Metropolitan Museum of Art readily accessible to educators throughout the New York area as well as across the country.

We hope you find this resource useful, informative, and enjoyable.

Philippe de Montebello

Director

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Associate Director
for Education

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# I. How to Use These Materials

These materials have been created to provide an understanding of ancient Egyptian art and its central role in Egyptian civilization. The aim is to stimulate curiosity, skills in observation, and a desire to visit a museum to see actual examples of Egyptian art.

Teachers can adapt this resource for students of all ages, interests, and abilities. There is a wealth of visual and written material to enrich art, social studies, and language arts curricula and to make interdisciplinary connections. Mathematics classes can explore the geometric bases for Egyptian art, its use of measured proportions, and its emphasis on horizontal and vertical axes. Teachers of science may focus on the themes of archaeology, the environment, and the media used for Egyptian art.

## Goals for Students

- to understand that Egyptian art is a conceptual art created to express Egyptian beliefs about:

  life after death

  the gods, who controlled the workings of the universe

  the king's divine powers, granted by the gods to maintain universal order

- to discover that these ideas were communicated through a visual language of symbols and artistic conventions that were understood by all ancient Egyptians

- to become comfortable talking about art. As students describe what they see, they will learn to identify what looks Egyptian about Egyptian art. In sharing their interpretations about the meaning of the art, they will develop language and critical-thinking skills. They will also discover that art is an important primary source in understanding a civilization.

- to understand that in a successful work of art the content, form (i.e., line, shape, color, etc.), and the materials with which it is made work together to reinforce the meaning and function. The idealized, balanced forms of Egyptian art, the use of durable and valuable materials, and the keenly observed naturalistic details effectively express the Egyptians' desire for order, their beliefs about eternity, and their love of life.

- to prepare for a museum visit

## Procedures for the Teacher

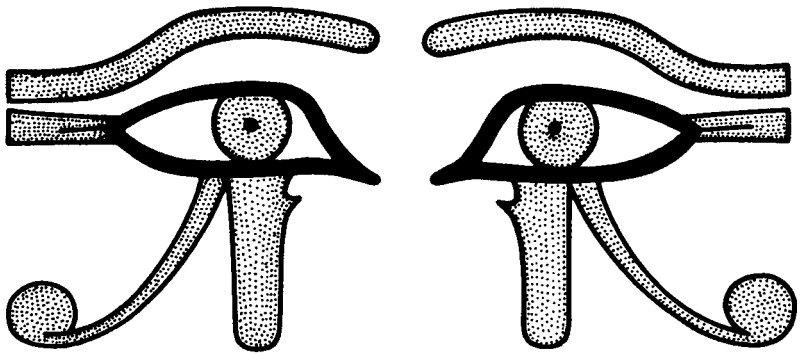
Take a look at the table of contents and leaf through the materials so you will have an overview. Section 2, "A Summary of Ancient Egyptian History," including the "Historical Outline," and section 3, "Egyptian Art," will give you the background information you will need to help your students describe, interpret, and enjoy Egyptian art.

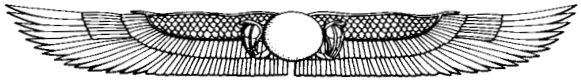
In section 7, "Activities," beginning on page 147 there are lesson plans that are designed for teachers and educators who have not taught ancient Egyptian civilization before, for those who are looking for interdisciplinary approaches, or for those who seek a direct connection with their school's curriculum.

Detailed suggestions for looking at and discussing the posters and the slides appear on pages 61–63 and 64–126. Themes to link all the visual materials are listed on page 65.

This resource is designed to be flexible. Depending on the age and interests of the class and the time you have available, you may use all or only parts of the discussions, activities, and lesson plans suggested.

Pages identified by the drawing of a detail of a magic rod (see glossary) at the top may be photocopied and handed out to your students. Feel free to photocopy any other drawings in the text.





# II. A Summary of Ancient Egyptian History

People sometimes say that the ancient Egyptian civilization endured without much change for more than three thousand years. This is only partially true because, in fact, Egyptian ways of life, philosophy, religion, language, and art changed considerably over time. However, the ancient Egyptian culture retained its identity and general character to a remarkable degree over the course of its history—a situation due in part to Egypt's favorable and secure location. Essentially a river oasis, the country was bordered by deserts to the west and east, by the Mediterranean Sea to the north, and by the first cataract of the Nile at Aswan in the south. Egyptians were not isolated, however. Situated in the northeastern corner of Africa, Egypt was a center for trade routes to and from western Asia, the Mediterranean, and central Africa.

Life in the Nile Valley and in the broader Nile Delta was punctuated by the fairly predictable rhythm of the annual flood of the Nile between July and October, which was caused by heavy monsoon rains far south in Ethiopia. When the waters receded, depositing rich soils on the fields, planting and harvesting followed. The growing time was followed by a dry season of low Nile water until the floods rose again the next year. The Egyptians believed the inundation was a gift of the gods, and its regular appearance strengthened their confidence in a divinely regulated cycle of death and life.

The kingdom of Egypt is the most ancient known in Africa. In early prehistoric times people lived in separate groups along the Nile. With the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt and the introduction of writing (about 3100 B.C.) the recorded history of Egypt as a nation began. The kings of the thirty dynasties who ruled Egypt were believed to reign by divine right and with divine force.

Historians divide the history of ancient Egypt into the following periods: Prehistory (up to ca. 3100 B.C.), the Archaic Period (ca. 3100–2650 B.C.), the Old Kingdom (ca. 2650–2150 B.C.), the Middle Kingdom (ca. 2040–1640 B.C.), the New Kingdom (ca. 1550–1070 B.C.), the Late Period (ca. 712–332 B.C.), and the Ptolemaic (Hellenistic) and Roman Periods (332 B.C.–A.D. 395). At these times of prosperity the kings initiated numerous building projects and sent out expeditions to extend Egypt's borders and expand trade routes. During the so-called First, Second, and Third Intermediate Periods (ca. 2150–2040 B.C., ca. 1640–1550 B.C., and 1070–712 B.C.), the land was politically fragmented, often reverting to local rule in Upper and Lower Egypt.

After the end of the New Kingdom indigenous Egyptian dynasties were weakened by rival factions in Upper and Lower Egypt, and Egypt was subjugated at times by foreign invaders: Libyans, Assyrians, Nubians, and Persians. In 332 B.C. Egypt was conquered by Alexander the Great, who was followed as ruler by his

general Ptolemy and Ptolemy's descendants. During the Ptolemaic Period (304–30 B.C.) Egypt entered into the Hellenistic world and later became a province of the Roman Empire following Egypt's conquest by Augustus Caesar in 30 B.C.

## *The People of Egypt*

Many people wonder what the ancient Egyptians looked like. This is difficult to answer because of the time that has elapsed and the fact that all surviving images are works of art, not documentary representations. It is safe to say that among the large family of African nations, the Egyptians' physical appearance evolved in the particular conditions of the Nile Valley. Skin tones were most probably darker in the south than in the north, and overall darker than in the rest of the Mediterranean basin. Otherwise, the works of art indicate that the Egyptian population was "variety itself" (as stated by Gamal Mokhtar in *General History of Africa II: Ancient Civilizations,* UNESCO International Scientific Committee for the Drafting of a General History of Africa [Berkeley, 1981], p. 15).

Egyptian society was hierarchically structured. Every individual had a specific place in a system that ultimately depended on and answered to the king. In the early phases—known especially from sources of Dynasty 4—the highest offices were held by members of the royal family. Later many offices of state were hereditary among the elite class, and it was desirable for a son to follow his father in office. Indications of office and rank were provided by a person's dress, hairstyle, and accoutrements (staves, scepters, jewelry, etc.). Most office-holders also had a title, and high rank was indicated by a long list of titles before a person's name, some of them honorific.

The first and foremost qualification for office was the ability to read and write. With the "invention" of the hieroglyphic writing system and its handwritten counterpart, hieratic, the Egyptian state was administered by scribes; top office holders, including the pharaoh—even if they employed scribes for daily work—had to be literate. It has been estimated that roughly one percent of the population belonged to the literate class. The rest were predominantly employed in agriculture, with craftsmen, "slaves," and foreigners as a fraction of the remaining population. All these people worked in institutional establishments, mainly royal, state, or temple estates, but there was also private ownership of land. For their work people received pay in food and other material goods. Craftsmen often had special status and were able to make some income "on the side" by selling products on their own.

It is a matter of debate whether the term "slave" is quite right for those people (prisoners of war, criminals, or other unfortunates) who were bound to work for somebody without the possibility of leaving. These people were sold and bought, but they were not without legal rights and could own property and marry as they wished. Female foreigners from western Asia who were bound in this way often worked as skilled weavers; others were house servants. Nubians were mercenaries and policemen.

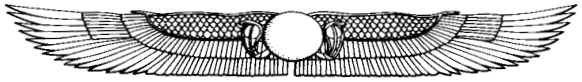
Landowners and production centers paid taxes to the state, mainly in goods, and all men were obliged to serve for a certain length of time (seventy-two days annually, according to one source) for the royal building projects, irrigation projects, or on expeditions that secured stone from the desert mountains.

The position of women in Egyptian society was generally secondary to that of men. As a rule they were excluded from high governmental and administrative offices, but there are exceptions. For instance, there were a handful of queens who ruled Egypt. A reigning queen was sometimes regent for a child king (usually her son) or successor of a king with no sons. The most famous, Hatshepsut, was senior co-regent with her nephew and stepson, Thutmosis III. In addition to the royal role of some women, during the Old Kingdom women sometimes were overseers of storehouses of food and cloth. They were also tenant landholders or held office related to weaving, medicine, singing and dancing, and funerary cults, often in the service of upper-class women. By the Middle Kingdom female officeholders were rare, and in the New Kingdom women primarily held court titles such as one translated as "lady in waiting." In spite of the gradual disappearance of administrative titles among women, there is reason to believe that some women, especially in the New Kingdom, were able to read and write.

In all periods the most important public function of women was religious. In the Old and Middle Kingdoms many upper-class women were priestesses of Hathor and other (usually female) deities. In the New Kingdom, when the office of priest had become an exclusively male occupation, women served as musicians (playing the sistrum) in the temples of both gods and goddesses. One religious office held exclusively by women at Thebes was that of "god's wife of Amun" and "divine adoratrice." This became a politically important position during the Third Intermediate and Late Dynastic Periods, when the officeholder was always the daughter of a pharaoh and was at least the titular ruler of the Theban area.

In ancient Egypt women were above all wives, mothers, and "mistresses of the house." As such, they played a subordinate role to men in Egyptian society, and this is how they were predominantly depicted in art. In reliefs, paintings, and statues women are represented embracing their husbands (the opposite is extremely rare); they are usually smaller in stature than men (as is natural), but in some periods and circumstances they are much smaller, as when they sit beside their husbands' legs. In paintings and reliefs women sit and stand behind men, and when a monument, such as a tomb, is dedicated exclusively to a woman, her husband usually does not appear, perhaps to spare him the indignity of a secondary place.

Remarkably, the legal status of women in Egypt was essentially equal to that of men. They could act on their own and were responsible for their own actions. Women could own property and dispose of it at will; they could enter into contracts and initiate court cases; they could serve as witnesses, sit on juries, and witness legal documents. In this respect women in ancient Egypt were in a much better position than those in many other ancient cultures.



# Historical Outline

Egyptians did not count time from one fixed point. Instead they based their chronology on the number of years each king ruled. The few surviving king lists are fragmented, omit certain controversial reigns, such as those of Hatshepsut and Akhenaten, and list several contemporaneously reigning dynasties (at times when the kingdom reverted to local rule in Upper and Lower Egypt) as if they reigned consecutively. Consequently, Egyptian chronology is far from exact. From 664 B.C. onward, however, the dating system can be related accurately to our calendar because of the mention of a solar eclipse in an Egyptian papyrus and correspondences with dated Greek and Persian sources. For the periods before 664 B.C. scholars continue to be engaged in lively debates about which exact dates best match available ancient sources. In books about ancient Egypt the reader will find dates that can differ by thirty or even fifty years. The following dates are those used in the Egyptian galleries by The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

**PREHISTORY**

*Predynastic Period (late 6th–late 4th millennium B.C.)*

From early agricultural communities to urban settlements. Distinct differences between Upper (southern) and Lower (northern) Egypt, with the latter, in the earliest phases, showing affinities with North African cultures on the one side and western Asiatic on the other.

*Protodynastic Period (ca. 3300–3100 B.C.)*

Lower Egypt increasingly infiltrated by Upper Egyptian culture, probably through trade that also included goods from Canaan. Rich cultural influences also from western Asia. Political unity achieved gradually by the spread of a uniform material culture and a series of conflicts rather than by one single conquest. Beginning of hieroglyphic writing. Some names of kings (Dynasty 0) are known.

**ARCHAIC PERIOD (ca. 3100–2650 B.C.)**

*Dynasty 1*
*Dynasty 2*

At the beginning of Dynasty 1, Egypt unified under the rule of one pharaoh (mythical name: Menes; historical figures: Narmer and Aha). Capital at Memphis; mud-brick burial monuments of kings at Abydos; large tombs of officials at Saqqara. Great amounts of imported goods from Canaan and trade with Nubian so-called A-group culture, but also military raids into Nubia.

| | |
|---|---|
| **OLD KINGDOM** | |
| **(ca. 2650–2150 B.C.)** | |
| *Dynasty 3* | The first major stone monument of Egypt, King Djoser's step pyramid (designed by architect Imhotep), built at Saqqara. |
| *Dynasty 4* | Pyramids of Snefru at Meidum and Dahshur. Pyramids of Khufu, Khafre, and Menkaure built at Giza. The sphinx cut from living rock at the side of Khafre's valley temple. |
| *Dynasty 5* | Mastaba tombs for royal officials at Saqqara and Giza continue from Dynasty 4, decorated with reliefs depicting scenes from daily life. Kings build pyramids (at Abusir) and sun temples. Trade with the Levant (Byblos) in sea-going ships. |
| *Dynasty 6* | Pyramids of kings at Saqqara; burial chambers since King Unas (last king of Dynasty 5) are inscribed with spells ("pyramid texts") to help king achieve rebirth in the afterlife. |
| | Power of provincial administrators increases. Relief decorated and painted cut-rock tombs at many provincial sites. Expeditions into Upper Nubia for central African goods. |
| **FIRST INTERMEDIATE PERIOD** | |
| **(ca. 2150–2040 B.C.)** | |
| *Dynasty 7 to early Dynasty 11* | Weakening of central government. Period of climatic change to more arid environment. Food shortages. Provinces struggle individually. Herakleopolis Magna (at Faiyum entrance) in the north and Thebes in the south emerge as main centers of power. |
| **MIDDLE KINGDOM** | |
| **(ca. 2040–1640 B.C.)** | |
| *Late Dynasty 11* | King Mentuhotep II of Upper Egypt reunites the country with capital at Thebes. Monumental building projects resume in Upper Egypt, as does trade with nearby lands. |
| *Dynasty 12* | One of the great periods of Egyptian art and literature ("portraits" of kings and texts such as "The Story of Sinuhe," "The Eloquent Peasant," "wisdom texts," etc.). First king, Amenemhat I, relocates capital to the north at El Lisht. His pyramid and that of his son (Senwosret I) built at Lisht according to Old Kingdom prototypes. Later pyramids at Dahshur, Illahun, and Hawara. In the Faiyum new land made available for cultivation through irrigation. Lower Nubia conquered and forts built at the second cataract. Important gods are Osiris (at Abydos) and Amun (at Thebes). Imports from Minoan Crete. |

*Dynasty 13*

During most of the dynasty administration continues as set up in Dynasty 12. Position of kings weakened by very short reigns. Asiatic foreigners settle in eastern delta and an important center for trade grows at Avaris (Tell el-Dab'a). Many imports from Canaan. Nubian forts are abandoned after middle of the dynasty.

*Dynasty 14*

Local rulers in the delta rule contemporaneously with rulers of late Dynasty 13.

**SECOND INTERMEDIATE PERIOD (ca. 1640–1550 B.C.)**

*Dynasties 15 and 16*

Western Asiatic kings originating from foreign community at Avaris with strong ties to southern Canaan gain power over most of Egypt. They are called "chiefs of foreign lands" (in Egyptian *heka khasut,* or Hyksos). They adopt the Egyptian title of pharaoh, usurp earlier monuments, and make contacts with the kingdom of Kerma in Nubia.

*Dynasty 17*

Ruling dynasty of Thebes contemporaneous with the Hyksos. They acknowledge Hyksos as their overlords, but at the end of the dynasty King Kamose starts movement to expel the Hyksos. From this time onward, Egyptian military power is based on the use of horse-drawn chariots.

**NEW KINGDOM (ca. 1550–1070 B.C.)**

*Dynasty 18*

King Ahmose reconquers Memphis and destroys Avaris, ending the Hyksos rule. Thutmosis I reconquers Nubia, which becomes a colony of Egypt. Hatshepsut, important female ruler, sponsors fine works of art and architecture (Temple of Deir el-Bahri). Beginning with Thutmosis III, Egypt becomes an empire controlling large parts of the Near East as well as Nubia. Time of a luxurious royal court with international tastes, especially under Amenhotep III.

In the Amarna period Akhenaten and Nefertiti break with the traditional religion in favor of the sole worship of the Aten (light). During their reign distinctive art is created and literature reflects a version of the language nearer to that actually spoken.

Tutankhamun restores worship of traditional gods. He leaves no royal heir. Haremhab becomes the last king of the dynasty. He completes the return to traditional religion and art and possibly names as successor Ramesses I, first ruler of Dynasty 19.

*Dynasty 19*

Great era of temple building. Campaigns in the Near East against the Hittites; peace treaty made with Hittites in reign of Ramesses II.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Dynasty 20* | Ramesses III repels the "sea peoples" (dislocated tribes mainly from Asia Minor). Political decline and economic difficulties. Traditional time of the Israelites' exodus from Egypt. |
| **THIRD INTERMEDIATE PERIOD (ca. 1070–712 B.C.)** | |
| *Dynasty 21* | Egypt again divided; one dynasty rules in Nile Delta, sharing power with high priests of Amun at Thebes. |
| *Dynasties 22–24* | Egypt gradually further divided. In Dynasty 22 rulers of Libyan descent coexist with other contemporary dynasties. Throughout Dynasties 21–24 Egypt's international power wanes. Rule over Nubia collapses. Private tombs more modest; high artistic quality maintained most notably in decoration of coffins and in metal casting and inlay. |
| **LATE PERIOD (7th–4th century B.C.)** | |
| *Dynasty 25* | Kushite rulers from Nubia invade and reunite Egypt. This drive from the south once again revives Egyptian art and architecture: great funeral "palaces" of high officials in Thebes; individualized images of high officials and Kushite kings. Assyrians invade and end Kushite rule over Egypt. |
| *Dynasty 26* | Assyrians withdraw. Kings from Sais in the delta rule Egypt. Greek settlements grow in significance; role of Greek mercenaries in king's army crucial. Important period of art: classicism and archaism. |
| *Dynasty 27* | Achaemenid Persians (who also threaten Greek city-states) invade Egypt and rule. |
| *Dynasties 28–30* | Last native rulers repel Persians. Dynasty 30 is brief (380–343 B.C.) but important period for Egyptian assertion of identity; in architecture and art basic concepts are initiated that establish what is Egyptian for centuries to come, influencing both Ptolemaic and Roman Periods. Persians invade again in 343 B.C., initiating the Second Persian Period (sometimes called Dynasty 31). |
| **PTOLEMAIC PERIOD (332–30 B.C.)** | In 332 B.C. Egypt is conquered by Alexander the Great (Macedonian Dynasty of mainland Greece [332–304 B.C.]). Upon his death, Greek general Ptolemy and his descendants rule. Important temples are built completely in Egyptian style. Many are preserved to this day (Edfu and Dendara). |

**ROMAN PERIOD**
**(30 B.C.–4th century A.D.)**

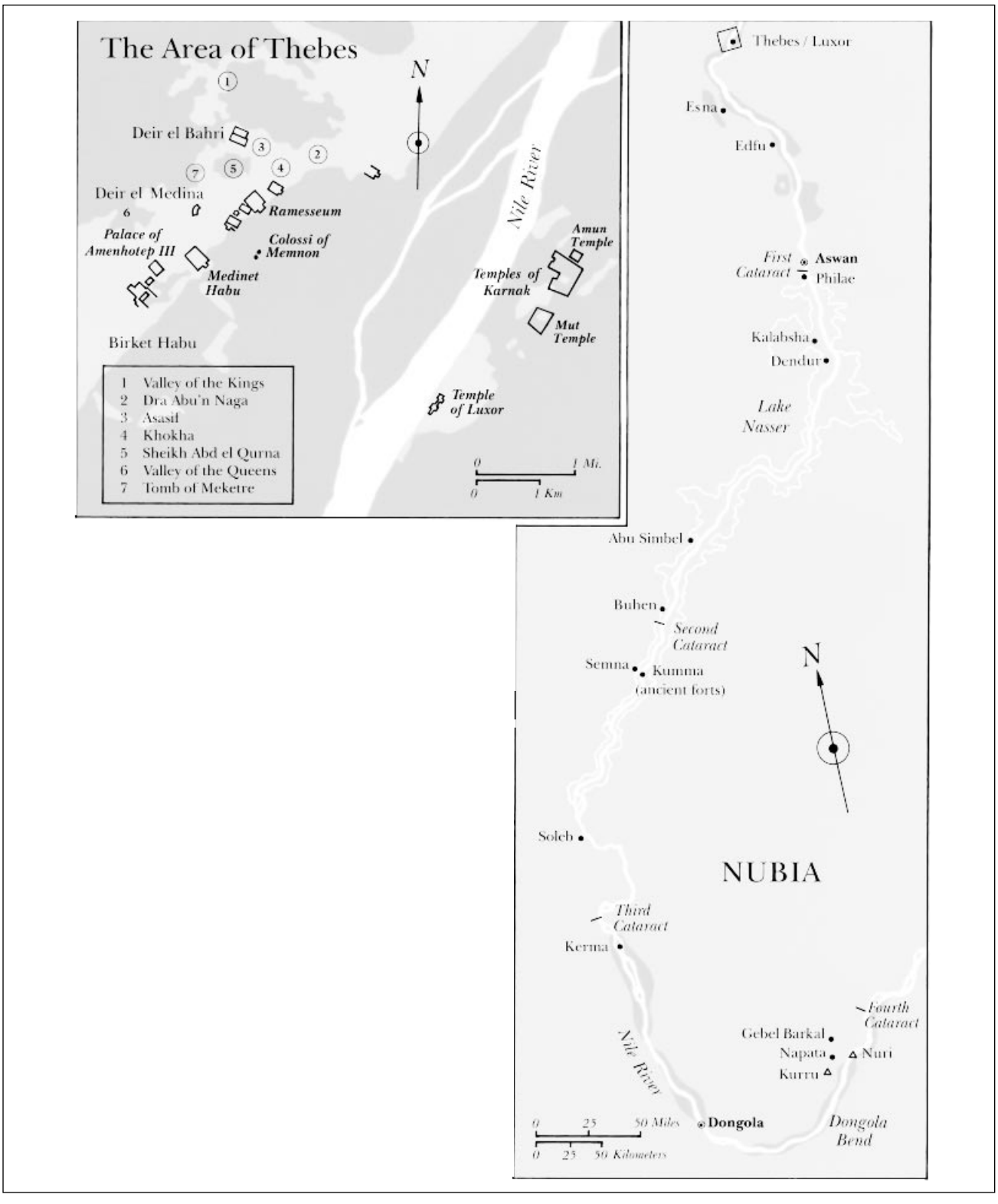
Last Ptolemaic ruler, Cleopatra VII, and Antony defeated by Augustus Caesar in 30 B.C. Egypt conquered by Rome. Last great phase of temple building under Augustus (Temple of Dendur). Under rule of Roman emperors temples are still enlarged and decorated in Egyptian style. In other forms of art Greco-Roman elements are mixed with Egyptian ones. Mummy portraits (the "Faiyum portraits") are painted in Greek manner and technique but fixed to Egyptian-style mummies. Last datable hieroglyphic inscription is A.D. 394 at Philae sanctuary of Isis on island near Aswan.

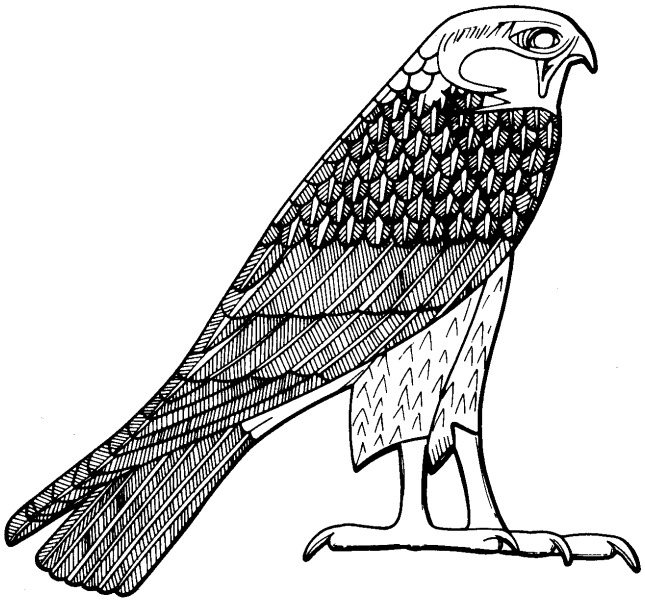


## Northern Nile Valley

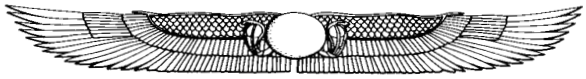


# Southern Nile Valley





The Egyptian image of Horus, the sky god and a deity of kingship, is composed of properties of the peregrine and Lanner falcons and other falcon species.



# III. Egyptian Art

## THE FUNCTION OF ART IN ANCIENT EGYPT

What we call Egyptian art was originally created for religious and magical purposes. Its symbols and functions reveal the Egyptians' beliefs about the world and their attempts to understand and relate to it. In the Egyptian social and religious context, works of art played a practical role, whose straightforward physicality is not easy for the modern viewer to realize.

For example, the reliefs on temple walls depicting the king making offerings to the gods and smiting Egypt's enemies not only communicated the idea that the king was fulfilling his duty to maintain order in the universe. Egyptians also believed that these images, through their very existence, were instrumental in making this order a reality. Likewise, the statues Egyptians placed in their tombs and temples served as physical repositories for the spirit and material representatives of important and venerable persons. Through the ritual of "opening the mouth," each statue was made an actual living being able to receive offerings and prayers. The fundamental difference between an ordinary living being and a statue was that the "work of art" was destined to live eternally. To this end statues ideally were made of stone or other durable materials, such as hardwood or metal. Their features and poses were idealized, that is, they were represented according to the general standards Egyptians held for the beauty, dignity, and ethical attitude becoming to gods, kings, and human beings in high places. The identity of a statue's subject was established only in exceptional cases by the depiction of individual features. Identification was usually established by an inscription giving the individual's name. Writing, therefore, was an integral aspect of art; composed of pictorial signs, writing was, in fact, in itself a work of art. Aesthetic beauty, superb workmanship, and choice materials enhanced the potency of works of art for the ancient Egyptians as they do for us.

## MAJOR THEMES

### Cycles of Life

Egyptians believed that at the beginning of creation, a mound of earth arose out of an infinite watery darkness, just as the fields of Egypt reappear after the annual floods of the Nile. Upon this mound the Creative Force, the most visible aspect of which was the sun, generated the gods and, ultimately, all the living things on earth, in the waters, and in the sky. In plan and construction, Egyptian temples were metaphors in stone for these creation myths (slide 4).

For the Egyptians, creation was reenacted yearly as the inundation of the Nile receded and the land was renewed, bringing forth lush vegetation and a good harvest. They interpreted this annual event as a renewal of life and a triumph over death. They saw the same cosmic drama embodied in the daily cycle of the sun, which was born in the east and died in the west only to be reborn the next day. They also saw it in the human cycle of birth, death, and rebirth in the afterlife.

## The Role of the Gods

The Egyptians believed the universe and all events that occurred within it were governed by the will of gods. If the annual inundation of the Nile was too great or too scant, it was because the river was angry or because the king had become lax in maintaining order, not because of weather patterns in central Africa. The gods embodied not only all natural phenomena but also abstract concepts such as justice, kingship, protection, and truth. Their actions dominated all aspects of life. Therefore, to ensure survival and prosperity, the Egyptians performed elaborate rituals and made rich offerings to gain the favor of gods and spirits.

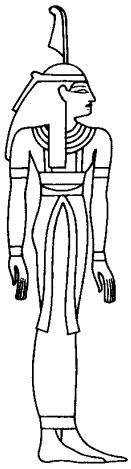


Thoth as a Baboon

To portray the multiple powers of their gods, the Egyptians imagined them in many different forms, often combining animal and human shapes (slides 17, 19, 25, 27–29, 38, 39, and poster). To make matters more confusing for us, some animals were shared by more than one god, and some gods had more than one animal attribute. For instance, Thoth, god of writing, was often symbolized by the baboon, known for its cleverness, especially with its hands (slide 38). The baboon was also associated with the sun god, because at sunrise baboons tend to sit facing the sun to warm themselves. Their poses suggested to the Egyptians that the baboons were worshiping the rebirth of the sun. Thoth also appeared as an ibis or ibis-headed human, for reasons the Egyptians understood but we do not (slide 39). This profusion of imagery was perfectly natural to the Egyptians because they believed no single image could fully represent the powers of a god.

The association of divine powers with animals was understandable for the ancient Egyptians, who lived closely with the many animal species that inhabited the Nile Valley and the surrounding desert. They must have been keenly aware of faculties animals have that humans lack, such as the ability to fly, to see in the dark, to hear and smell the approach of beings at great distances, and to move with extraordinary speed. To the Egyptians these animal characteristics seemed to be fueled by supernatural energy and to symbolize powers of certain deities. The Egyptians did not believe, however, that the gods were actual animals or human-animal combinations. An animal-headed image of a deity was an attempt to visualize the multiple aspects of that god. The human part of the image indicates that no ordinary animal is depicted and the animal head symbolizes the superhuman endowments of the god.

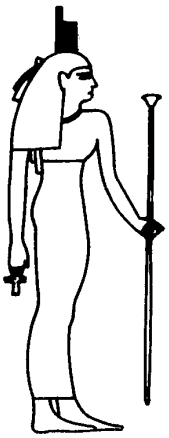
Drawings of Egyptian deities mentioned in these resource materials are given below and on the following page in some of their more recognizable guises.



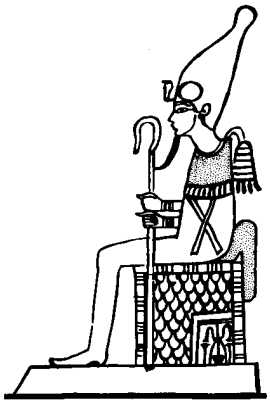
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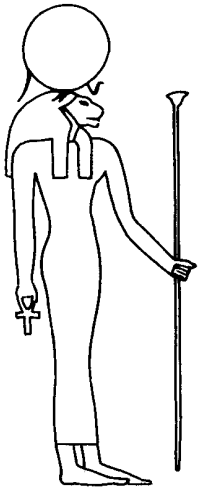
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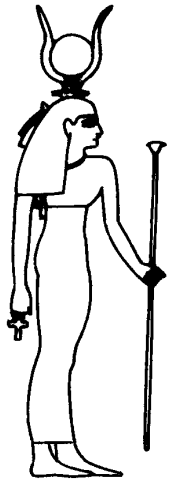
Isis



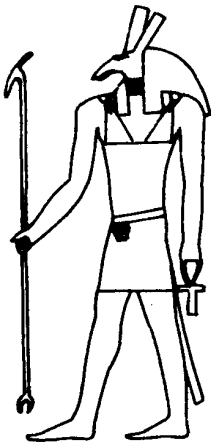
Osiris



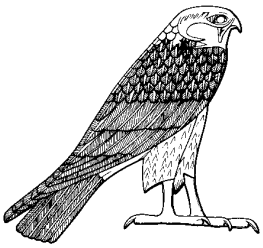
Sakhmet



Hathor



Seth



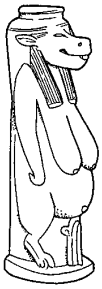
Horus as a Falcon



Jackal-Headed Anubis



Bes



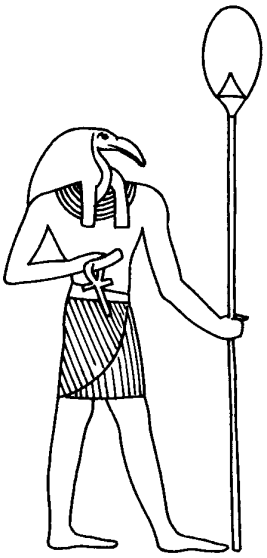
Taweret



Falcon-Headed Horus



Heh (Eternity)



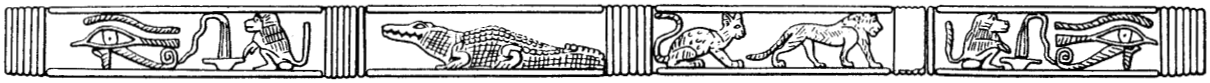
Ibis-Headed Thoth



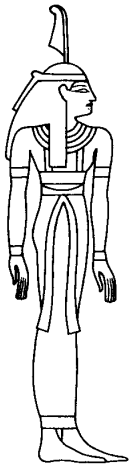
Thoth as a Baboon



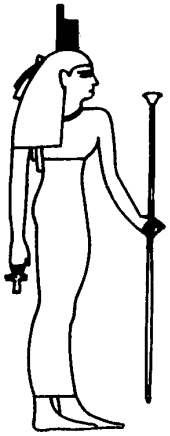
Amun

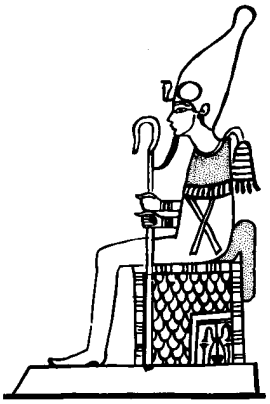


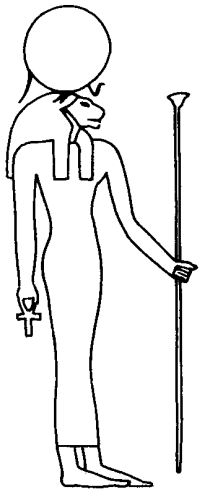
# Common Forms of Major Deities

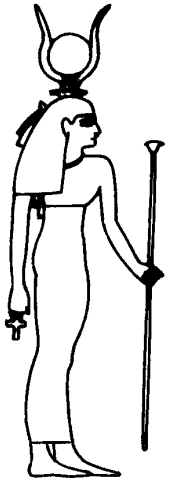


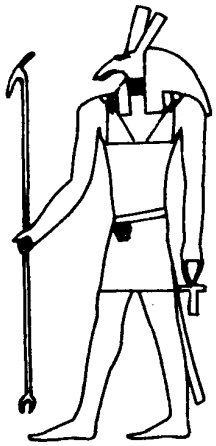


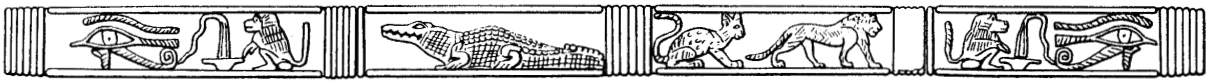




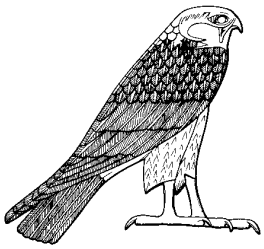






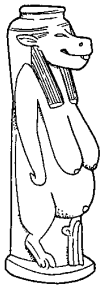


# Common Forms of Major Deities





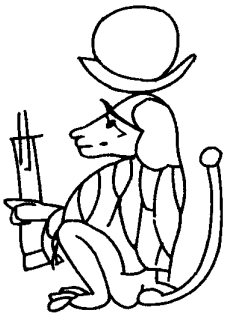












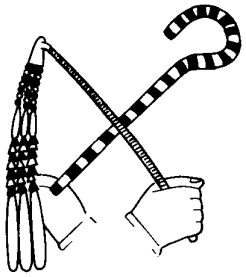


## Representation of Deities in Art

Egyptian temples were the houses of gods, who resided in a literal sense in the cult statues inside the hidden sanctuary. It was the duty of the king to minister to the gods in their temples by daily rituals in which the cult statue was clothed, anointed, and fed by the placing of food offerings in front of it. In practice, priests mostly took the role of the king in these rituals, but in the reliefs that decorated the temple walls it is the king who communicates with the gods. Ordinary people never saw the cult statues; they entered only the temple courts, not the sanctuary, and saw the shrine of the god when it was carried outside in processions.

For their personal religious needs the Egyptians often addressed special deities, such as Taweret for matters pertaining to childbirth or Bes for concerns about childbirth and sexual life. Small figurines of these deities were kept in houses or were worn as personal adornment together with many charms. Magic played an important role in daily life, medicine, and all beliefs surrounding death.

In art, gods and goddesses were depicted as humans, animals, or as humans with animal heads. They were further identified by emblematic headdresses and they held in their hands a variety of scepters and the ankh, the hieroglyphic sign for life. The crook and flail, emblems of Egyptian kings, were held by Osiris because he was the king of the underworld.



Crook and Flail

## Life after Death

Many surviving Egyptian works of art have been discovered in ancient tombs. No people has created a greater variety of art forms to ensure the protection and well-being of the deceased in the afterlife. Officials were pictured with their wives, families, and servants on the walls of tombs and in stone and wood sculpture. These images reflect the Egyptians' love of life and their consequent belief in the reality of a life after death.

The Egyptians did not look forward to an angelic afterlife in some distant paradise but to the continuation of their daily lives on Earth, among the living, enjoying all the pleasures of life with none of its pain or hardships. This vision of the afterlife is vividly depicted in the sculptures, reliefs, and wall paintings of Egyptian tombs, with the deceased portrayed in the way he or she wished to remain forever (slides 8–10, 15, 20, 22–25, 31, 33, 36, 37, and 40). To achieve this ideal existence, however, a proper burial was necessary.

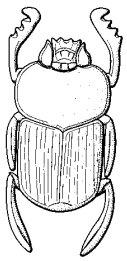
The afterlife involved a daily interaction between the three major components of a human being: the body, the *ka,* and the *ba*. The body was the physical component. After death it was preserved through the process of mummification, in which it was dried out with salts and wrapped in linen strips and sheets soaked with resin, so that it would remain unchanging and whole forever.

The *ka* was the life force. At death it separated from the body and returned to the creator, from whom it had come; the deceased's goal was to rejoin the *ka* each day in order to live again. During life the *ka* had been sustained through food and drink, and this relationship needed to continue after death. That is why the Egyptians laid such emphasis on the presentation of food offerings at the tomb, and why the tombs themselves were equipped with scenes or models of food, food production, and dining (slides 9, 10, and 33). These provided the *ka* with a continual source of sustenance that could be consumed without affecting the physical offerings or depictions themselves. As the focus for offerings, the tomb was known as the "*ka* house"; statues of the deceased within the tomb are often called "*ka* statues" for the same reason.



*Ba* Bird

The *ba* is the human being him- or herself—everything that makes a person an individual except for the body. The *ba* is also the link between life on earth and the afterlife. Each night the *ba* was expected to rejoin the mummy in the tomb and to receive from it the power of rebirth. In this union the *ba* was reunited with its life force, the *ka*, and became an *akh*—literally, an "effective being"—able to come to life again each day. This daily cycle of rebirth was patterned on that of the sun, which joined with the mummy of Osiris in the depths of the night and received from the mummy the ability to rise again at dawn. Because of its ability to move between the tomb and the world of the living, the *ba* was often depicted as a bird, but with a human head.



Scarab

To protect it from harm, and to aid in the daily transferal of new life to the *ba*, the mummy was surrounded by magic spells, amulets such as scarabs, and representations of protective deities (slides 13, 17, 25, 28, 32, 38, and poster). To help the *ba* in its hazardous journey through the night to rebirth at dawn, rituals and magic spells were inscribed on the walls of the burial chamber, sarcophagus, and coffins. Beginning in the New Kingdom such texts were also placed on papyrus scrolls buried with the deceased, known as the *Book of the Dead.*

Although the Egyptians viewed the afterlife as a daily cycle of rebirth, that new, ideal existence was available only to those who had lived properly before death. On its first nightly encounter with Osiris the *ba* had to undergo a judgment, in which its heart (the seat of thought and emotion) was balanced on a scale against a feather, the symbol of *Maat* (things as they ought to be). If the two did not balance, the *ba* was denied the chance to enter the cycle of daily rebirth; to the Egyptians this was known as "dying a second time." To help the *ba* pass this trial, the *Book of the Dead* was provided with a set of proper spells to recite and a scene of successful judgment; the mummy itself was also given a "heart scarab," inscribed with a spell requesting it not to testify against the *ba.* Once the trial had been passed, the deceased was declared "true of voice," and was able to begin the eternal cycle of daily rebirth.

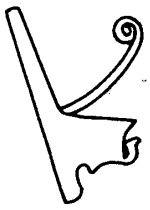
This vision of the afterlife remained essentially unchanged throughout the three thousand years of pharaonic civilization. It provided the ancient Egyptians not only with the hope of life after death but with the comfort of knowing that their loved ones still lived in the world around them.

## Order over Chaos: The Role of the King

The ancient Egyptians believed that the king was endowed with divine power so he could maintain universal order and justice against the forces of chaos and evil (slides 18, 19, 21, 23, and 34). The goddess Maat personified the equilibrium in the world; she was, therefore, especially associated with the king. On the strength of his divine nature the king was the mediator between the gods and humankind.

To describe the king's divine but by no means fully godlike nature, the Egyptians called the king the living embodiment of Horus and the son of Re (sometimes also spelled Ra—pronounced RAY), the sun god. Only in exceptional cases were kings worshiped fully as gods during their lifetimes. At death the king became one with Osiris, god of the underworld and symbol of the afterlife, and on earth his divine powers were passed on to the next ruler. In the ancient Egyptian language there are several words we translate as "king." These words refer exclusively to the king of Egypt; rulers of other lands were given lesser titles, such as prince or chieftain. *Nesut bity* means "king of Upper and Lower Egypt" and was used when the king issued proclamations or spoke officially to his people. Another word, *hem* (as in *hemek*, meaning "your person"), could be used as in "your majesty" by someone greeting the king face-to-face or writing to him. The name *pharaoh*, meaning "great house," originally referred to the royal palace and its inhabitants, but by the time of Ramesses II *pharaoh* had become a respectful term meaning the king himself.

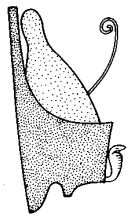
Below are some of the symbols for Upper and Lower Egypt.



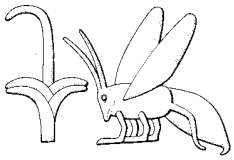
Crown of Lower Egypt (Red Crown)



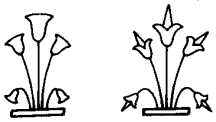
Crown of Upper Egypt (White Crown)



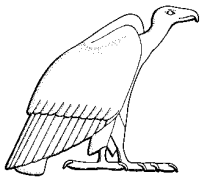
Double Crown (Crown of Upper and Lower Egypt)



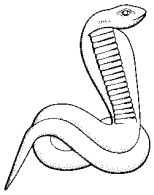
Sedge (Upper Egypt) and Bee (Lower Egypt)



Papyrus (Lower Egypt) and Lotus (Upper Egypt)



Vulture (Upper Egypt)

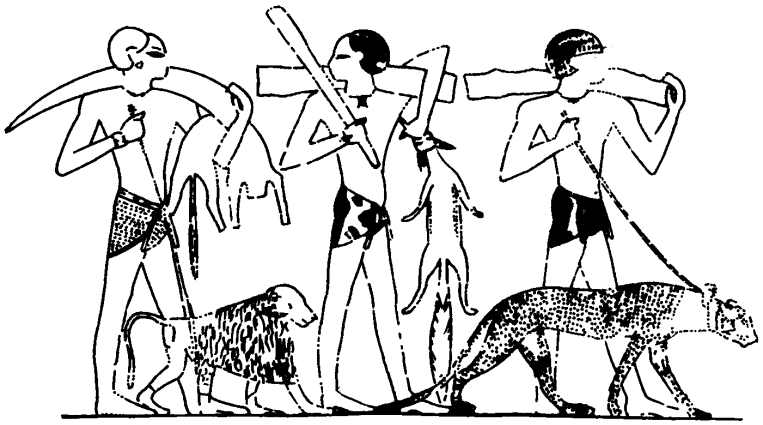


Cobra (Lower Egypt)

## The King in Art

Art played a vital role in asserting and activating the divine powers of kingship and in defining in visual terms the king's awesome responsibilities. The building of temples and maintenance of the gods' cults were, moreover, primary duties of every king. Although in actuality most cult practices were performed by priests, this always happened in the name of the ruling king. The reliefs in the inner chambers of the temples, therefore, showed only the king communicating with the gods. These reliefs were believed to perpetuate the religious rites, even if nobody actually performed them. Statues of kings in temples either showed pharaoh in the performance of cult activities or were *ka* statues that received their own rites and offerings, thus strengthening the bond between the king and the gods (slides 4, 15, 21, and 25).

Egypt's contact with its neighbors was to a large extent through peaceful trade, and peoples of these lands were often shown in Egyptian art bringing "gifts" (in reality, trade goods) to the king. However, images of foreigners could also symbolize the forces of chaos. Thus, reliefs of the king in his chariot trampling Egypt's enemies—often found on the outside walls and pylon gates of temples—signified not only military triumph but also the triumph of order over chaos and thus protected the temples from evil (slide 18). The bows of Egypt's nine traditional enemies are often depicted beneath the feet of figures of enthroned kings, emphasizing the protective role of pharaoh.



Nubians carrying tribute to the Egyptian king.

Kings were conventionally represented as idealized, perfect human beings, but in some periods the king's face was represented as careworn, even old (Middle Kingdom; slide 16). At other times individual traits were indicated, such as the drawn features and visionary face of King Akhenaten (slide 21). Even when idealized, a king's face was usually characterized in such a way that his people would recognize him (or her) even if they could not read the name. This enables art historians to ascribe heads of kings without inscriptions to specific rulers, often with fair certainty.

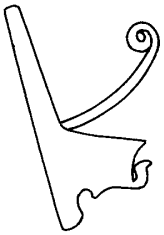
Kings were identified as royalty by specific inscriptions and by their regalia: the royal kilt, with an ornamental bull's tail, symbolizing superhuman power; a group of traditional crowns with the sacred uraeus, or cobra, at the forehead (slides 23 and 26); the rectangular false beard; the crook and flail held by the king across his chest; and the cartouches encircling the king's two most important royal names—his throne name, *nesut bity* (ruler of Upper and Lower Egypt), and his birth name, which identified him as son of Re, the sun god. In a similar way the status of officials, scribes, and lesser ranks of citizens was indicated by what they wore and held (slides 24 and 37).

## The Queen

There is no word for "queen" in the ancient Egyptian language. The queen was called *hemet nesut* (wife of the king). The king usually had several wives; however, at least in the New Kingdom, one was identified as main queen by the title "great wife of the king." A queen's status was highest when her son became king. There are a number of cases where a queen mother ruled for her son who was still a child. Several queens also ruled in their own right, often at the end of a dynasty. Queen Hatshepsut, the most famous female pharaoh, was first co-ruler with her young nephew Thutmosis III, then took over "kingship" on her own (slide 15).

As consorts queens shared the divine nature of the king and were occasionally identified with goddesses such as Hathor, Isis, or Tefnut (the female part of the first gendered pair of gods). The crown worn most frequently by queens consisted of the head, wings, and tail of a vulture, but queens also wore the horns and sun disk of Hathor.

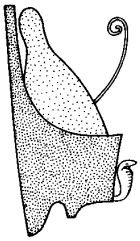
Here are some of the regalia that identified royalty:



Crown of
Lower Egypt
(Red Crown)



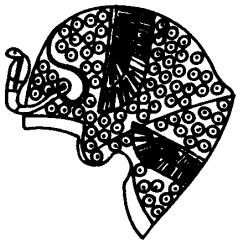
Crown of
Upper Egypt
(White Crown)



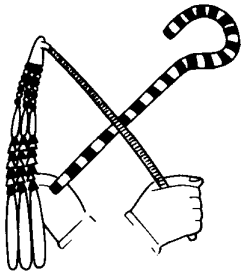
Double Crown (Crown
of Upper and Lower
Egypt)



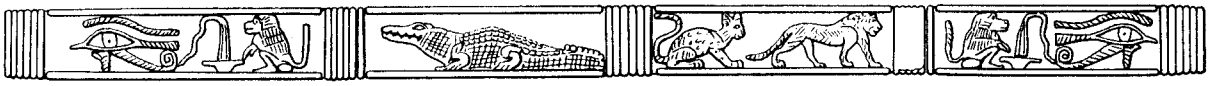
*Nemes* (Pleated Cloth) Headdress to
Which the False Royal Beard Is
Attached by Straps



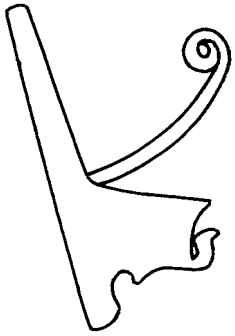
"Blue" Crown

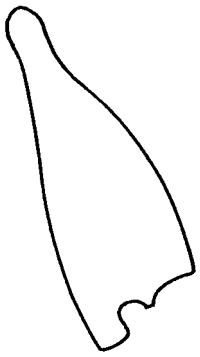


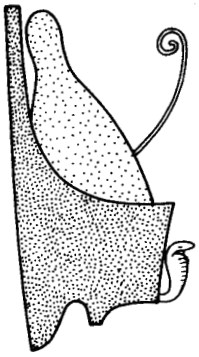
Crook and Flail

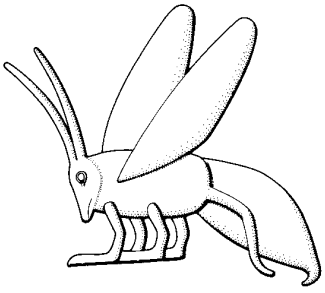


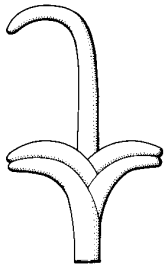
# Symbols of Upper and Lower Egypt

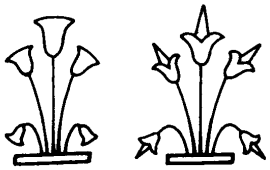


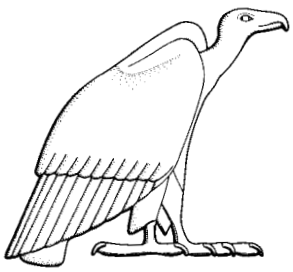


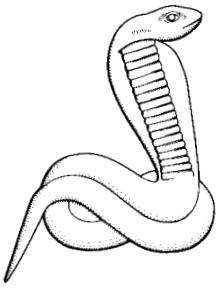


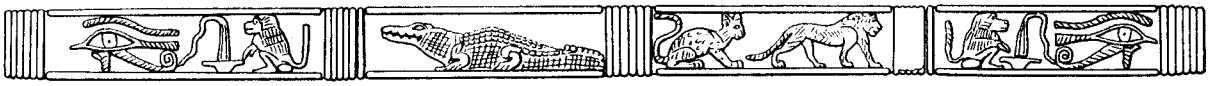




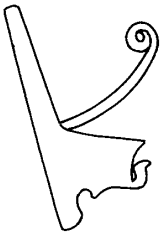




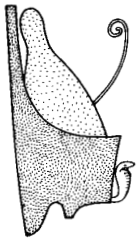




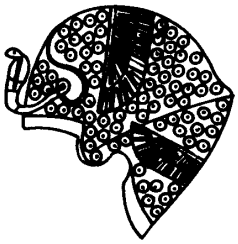
# Royal Regalia of Ancient Egypt

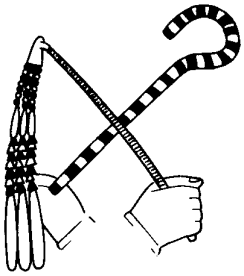












# FORM IN EGYPTIAN ART

## Clarity, Balance, and Stability

Egyptian artists developed ideal forms that became the standard, or conventional, way of expressing desired meanings. The major figure of a composition, for instance, was usually larger than the more subsidiary ones, and its poses (standing, walking, sitting, or kneeling) were the most stylized. Even for subsidiary figures a limited number of arm and hand gestures were used to explain what the figure was doing.

The following are commonly used poses and gestures:

| | |
|---|---|
| *worshiping* | both arms extended forward with hands upraised |
| *presenting, offering* | both arms extended forward with an object held in one or both palms |
| *ready to receive offerings* | seated with one or both arms resting on one's lap, palms down |
| *summoning* | one arm extended forward with the palm open |
| *protecting* | both arms extended out to the sides with the palms facing forward |
| *rejoicing* | both arms extended out to the sides with palms turned away from the body |
| *praising* | crouched on one knee, one arm raised and the other held against the chest with clenched fist |
| *mourning* | arms raised with palms turned toward the face |



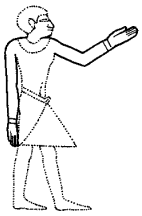
worshiping



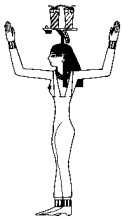
presenting, offering



ready to receive offerings



summoning



protecting



rejoicing



praising



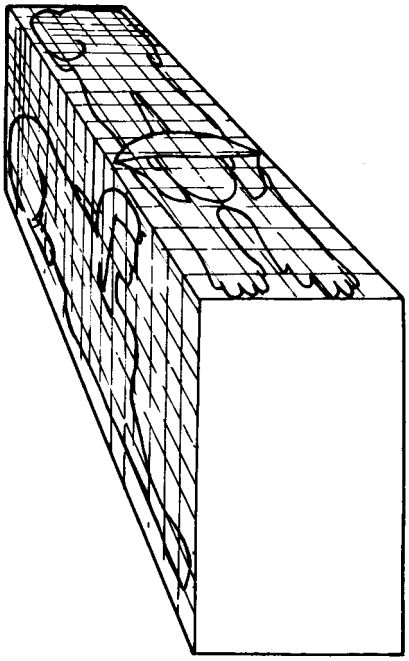
mourning

Balanced forms and compositions, clear outlines, simplified shapes, and flat areas of color were used to create order and clarity, and figures and scenes were arranged in horizontal rows (called registers). Momentary, fleeting images such as expressions of emotion or strenuous physical activity were not often treated because they were transitory, not permanent features. Nor were Egyptian artists much interested in the play of light and shadow or the illusion of space and atmosphere in outdoor scenes.

## A Geometric Basis for Natural Forms

The structural elements of Egyptian art are the cube and horizontal and vertical axes. When preparing to carve a statue or decorate a wall, Egyptian artists first drew horizontal and vertical guidelines on the surface so the proportions of the figures would be consistent with the established canon. The result of such measured proportions and relationships was an art of remarkable order and uniformity that maintains the same balance whether in a colossal statue or a figure in hieroglyphic script. The guidelines also helped to arrange rows and groups of figures in a unified manner.

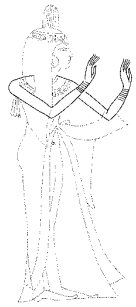
In creating three-dimensional sculpture in stone, artists started with a block upon which they drew guidelines on all sides. They then carved until the figure emerged, renewing the guidelines from stage to stage. Egyptian sculptors seldom completely freed figures from the stone block. With few exceptions, no space was carved out between the arms and torso or between the legs of standing figures. The lower part of seated figures is adapted to a large degree to the rectangular shape of the blocklike seat (slides 15, 19, 31, and 37). The backs of many standing figures remain attached to an upright slab or pillar, which Egyptologists call a "back pillar." Such elements contribute to the centered and poised character of Egyptian stone statues and reinforce their frontality and axiality.



Conjectural reconstruction showing how guidelines may have been drawn on a block of stone for a sculpture, based on a papyrus of the Greco-Roman Period.

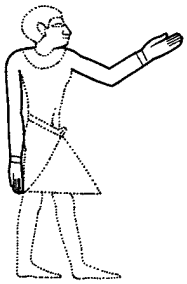
Figures carved in wood often were made from several pieces pegged together, since large logs had to be imported and were therefore costly. Because wood is lighter, much less brittle, and easier to carve than stone, wooden figures were sculpted more completely in the round, with open spaces between the legs and between the arms and torso. However, wooden figures are represented in the same balanced and relatively motionless frontal poses as those in stone, giving an impression of stability appropriate for idealized and lasting images (slide 10).

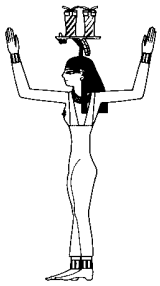
# Poses and Gestures

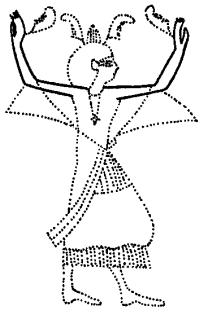


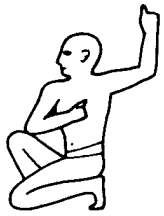




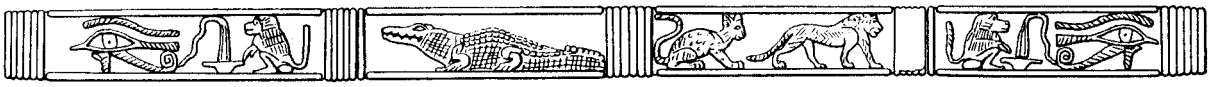


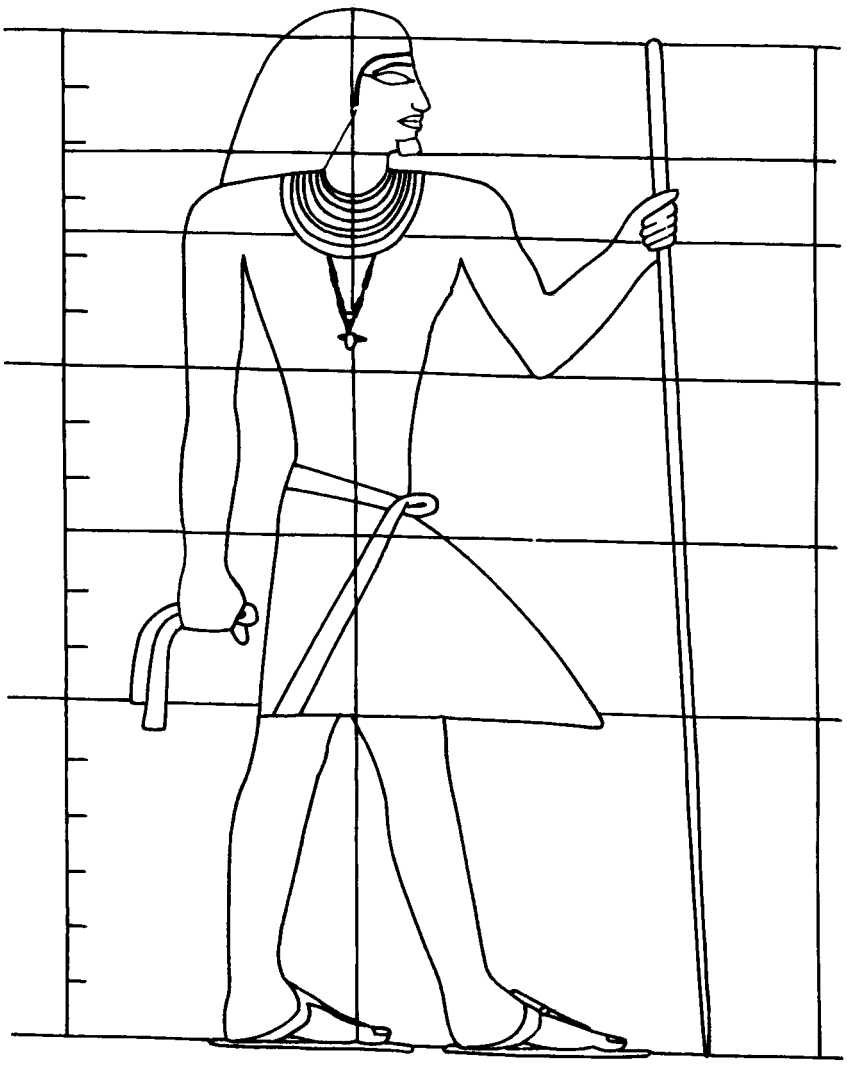












During most of Egyptian history the proportions of the human figure were related to the width of the palm of the hand. The entire figure from feet to hairline is eighteen palms high (the top of the head was not included because of the variety of headdresses and crowns); the face is two palms high. The shoulders are aligned at sixteen palms from the base of the figure, the elbows align at twelve from the base, and the knees at six.

## Naturalistic Details

Egyptian art characteristically demonstrates a keen observation of nature. Although the proportions and poses of Egyptian sculptures were based upon strict conventions, subtle indications of musculature and bone structure suggest the artists were well aware of anatomy (slides 10, 27, and 31). Nowhere is this attention to natural detail more evident than in the way Egyptian artists depicted animals (slides 21, 30, 34, 35, and 36). In wall paintings and reliefs of hunting and fowling, species of animals are accurately portrayed in their environments, interacting in natural ways with other animals. In these detailed portrayals of the world, artists expressed the Egyptian love of life. One should, however, observe that the animals are predominantly shown in profile and their representations also follow the rules of frontality and axiality.



Man and dogs hunting gazelles. Line drawing after a stone relief in the Metropolitan Museum's collection (acc. no. 08.201.1).

## Representational Conventions

When depicting the human body on a two-dimensional surface, artists used different points of view to show each part of the body in its most complete form. For instance, the shoulders are seen from the front. The torso and hips turn in three-quarter view so that the legs and arms can be seen in profile. The head is also shown in profile—to display simultaneously the back and the front, with protruding nose and lips—but the eye is drawn as if seen from the front, looking directly at the viewer.

Distance in space from the viewer, if indicated at all, is represented either by one figure overlapping another or by more distant figures being placed above those in the foreground (slide 36). Important



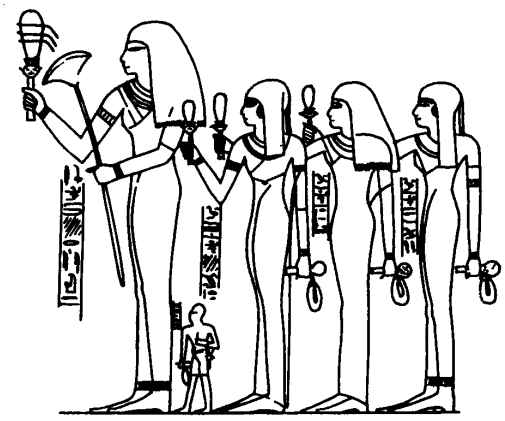
Line drawing of a figure of Perneb from the false door and facade of his tomb, showing Egyptian conventions of representing a standing man.

figures usually do not overlap one another, because that would make them appear to be less than complete. However, groups of servants, attendants, and animals often are shown overlapping, sometimes in rhythmic repetitions and patterns (slide 18).



Running troops, showing overlapping and rhythmic repetition of figures. Line drawing after a stone relief in the Metropolitan Museum's collection (acc. no. 15.3.1163).

In depicting objects or landscapes, artists also used multiple points of view to convey the most complete information. For example, in offering scenes the recipient sits before a table of which the legs are in profile and the top is viewed as if one were looking directly down upon it. Yet the food piled on the tabletop is arranged vertically, each piece in its most recognizable form resting on top of the next (slide 33). In tomb paintings of gardens with pools—a favorite afterlife scene symbolizing rebirth—trees and flowers surrounding the pool are shown in profile, as are the patterns of the pool's ripples. The pool, however, is shown from above so the exact shape is clearly visible. Similarly the water in slide 36 is shown from above, but the birds and plants on the water and the fish in it are shown in profile.



The wife of the deceased (a lady-in-waiting named Roy) and her three daughters (all chantresses of Amun); the little man is a priestly servant. Their sizes indicate their relative importance. (Scene from tomb 75 at Western Thebes)

## Scale

Size indicates relative importance. Images of the king are often much larger than life to symbolize the ruler's superhuman powers. In wall reliefs and paintings servants and entertainers, animals, trees, and architectural details are usually shown in smaller scale than the figures of the king, high official, or tomb owner (slides 31, 33, and 36).

## Surface Contrasts and Relief Work

Egyptian stone sculpture, even when carved from the hardest materials, often possesses highly polished surfaces that contrast with finely incised details and patterns, whose surfaces are more rough. There are two types of relief carving: raised and sunk. In raised relief (also called bas relief) the whole space around figures is lowered, whereas in sunk relief only the outlines of the figures are recessed. In both types of relief the depth is usually less than an inch, and detailed modeling inside the figures is often achieved by carving at minute differences of depth. Since all inside modeling of figures—whether in sunk or raised relief—is always done in the raised technique, the two types of carving appear to have been combined in scenes where figures overlap. This is especially characteristic of reliefs of the Amarna period (slide 21).

## Color

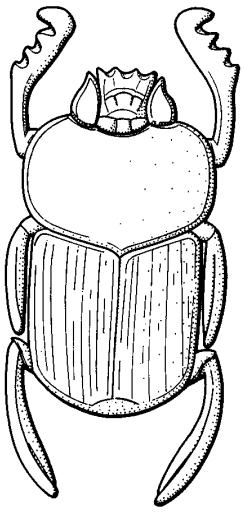
Sculpture, reliefs, and wooden coffins were enriched with warm and cool colors (slides 10, 18, 28, 32, 36, and poster). A similar sensitivity to color contrasts is evident in jewelry design (slide 17). Colors not only had aesthetic appeal but also had symbolic meaning. Blue and green were associated with water, the Nile, and vegetation. Yellow and gold stood for the sun and the sun god. Red and red-orange had complex meanings involving the desert, power, blood, and vitality. Gender was indicated by color as well as costume. It was a convention to portray men with reddish-brown skin and women with a yellow-tan color (slide 33). Nubians and tribute bearers from central Africa were often colored darker than Egyptians, and people from some other nations might be colored lighter. Lighter and darker skin tones were also used to differentiate overlapping figures.

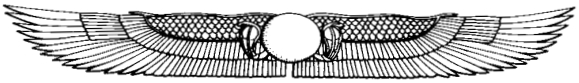
## The Amarna Period (1353–1336 B.C.): Change in the Forms of Art

The artists employed by King Akhenaten in his seventeen-year reign created a style of art as revolutionary as Akhenaten's elevation of the Aten (the sun disk, or light) to the position of sole god and his attempt to eradicate the worship of other gods, especially Amun of Thebes. Akhenaten took the throne as Amenhotep IV but changed his name to Akhenaten (meaning "effective for the Aten"). The traditional majestic and ideal forms of the king and gods were replaced with exaggerated, elongated images of the king and Nefertiti, his queen (slide 21). Intimate affection and tenderness were shown in scenes portraying the king with his wife and daughters. Controversy continues as to whether Akhenaten's peculiar features as depicted in art reflect actual physical deformities or are part of the expressionistic style of the period. In the later years of his

reign Amarna art developed a graceful, softly naturalistic style (slides 22 and 23) that deeply influenced the art of the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Dynasties ("Post-Amarna" art; slides 24, 25, 26, and 37).

Akhenaten's attempt to transform Egyptian religion did not last beyond his reign. Shortly after becoming king, Akhenaten's heir, Tutankhaten ("living image of Aten"), changed his name to Tutankhamun ("living image of Amun"; slide 23) and reestablished the cult of Amun and other gods.





# Hieroglyphs and Egyptian Art

From the very beginning of Egyptian history, writing and art were inseparable. Before 3000 B.C., in the same time that scribes were finalizing the standards and signs of hieroglyphic writing, artists were creating conventions for representation of figures and objects in sculpture, painting, and relief. Consequently, most Egyptian works of art are actually larger forms of the figures in hieroglyphs. For example, the figure of a seated man, which appears frequently in sculpture and painting, is also the hieroglyphic ideogram for "man." As much care was taken in drawing the hieroglyphs as in creating the images in art. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that in the ancient Egyptian language the same word *(sekh)* is used for writing, drawing, and painting.

In Egyptian hieroglyphs some of the pictures (called ideograms or sense signs) represent the actual object, such as the words for "land," "offering," and "scepter," which appear on the following pages. However, many words—such as "life," "power," "justice," "understand," and "protect"—cannot be expressed by pictures. To write such words the Egyptians employed the rebus method, which uses the pictures of things not to denote these things themselves but to stand for other words, or parts of words, that sound the same (such signs are called phonograms or sound signs). For example, the hieroglyph that looks like a duck is the sound for the word that means "son," the picture of a basket is the sound that means "lord," and a scarab beetle represents the sound that means "to come into existence." When these glyphs are meant to represent an actual duck, basket, or scarab instead of sounds, usually they are followed by a single stroke.

Twenty-four hieroglyphs represent single sounds and were used by the Egyptians the way the letters of our alphabet are used. They are all consonants (see below, in the explanation of the signs meaning "eternally"). Other glyphs represent the combination of two or three consonants. Single sound signs are often used as complements to the two- or three-sound signs, repeating either the first or the last letter of a multiple sound sign. The Egyptians did not write the vowel sounds. To pronounce Egyptian words, we usually use *e* (eh) or *a* (ah) sounds between the consonant sounds. Because the actual vowel sounds are not known, there are often several different English spellings of Egyptian names. For example, although in these materials you will find the spelling Meketre, in other materials you may see an alternate spelling, Mekutra.

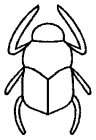
At the end of most words the Egyptians put a so-called determinative. This is an ideogram that explains the meaning of a word. For instance, after *hemet* (wife) there is the figure of a seated woman. Since hieroglyphs represent only the consonant sounds, determinatives served to differentiate between words that have the same consonants but different vowels. Determinatives are not pronounced.

In order to write well, Egyptian scribes needed to know some seven hundred hieroglyphs and to be able to draw them clearly. In documents on papyrus, which are usually written in a cursive script, the scribe wrote from right to left. Hieroglyphs, however, can be written from right to left or from left to right and often appear written in both directions on carvings and wall paintings. To know which way to start, note the way the animal and human figures are facing and read *from* that direction *into* their faces. For example, if an animal faces right, start reading from the right. Lines of hieroglyphs in both directions can be arranged horizontally or vertically. All these variations enabled artists to combine inscriptions and figures in a great number of ways.

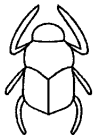
The word *hieroglyph* is Greek. The Greeks saw this form of writing mainly on the walls of Egyptian temples, so they gave the symbols this name, which means sacred signs. The handwritten version of hieroglyphs was, in Greek times, used primarily by priests, so it was given the Greek name *hieratic* (priestly), although it was the everyday manner of writing during most of Egyptian history.

## Some Frequently Used Hieroglyphs

Note that in the descriptions that follow, the hieroglyphs on the left should be read *from* the *right*, and vice versa.



*Kheper*, the scarab beetle, means "to become" or "to evolve." It is an amulet in life and in death, symbolizing rebirth.



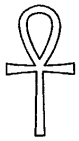


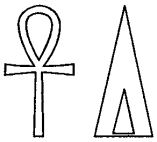
The *shen* sign, a ring of rope, symbolizes all that the sun encircles. As amulets, knots and ropes provide protection.



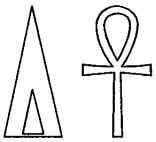


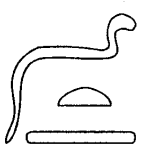
The ankh, possibly a sandal strap or an elaborate bow, means "life" and "to live." It is held by deities who frequently offer it to the king's face.





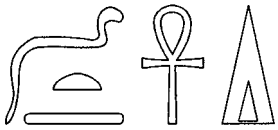
"Given life" is represented by a conical loaf of bread, which means "to give" or "given," and by the ankh.



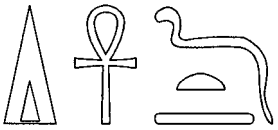


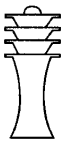
"Eternally" or "forever" (*djet*) is represented by three glyphs: a cobra (for the sound *dj*), a round loaf of bread (the sign for *t*), and a flat tract of land (the determinative).





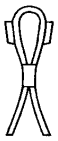
This combination of symbols means "given life forever." Note how hieroglyphic signs are always arranged to fill a square or rectangle in a balanced way.



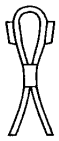


The *djed* sign, meaning "stability," may represent a stylized tree with the branches cut back or a bundle of reeds. The sign was closely associated with Osiris.





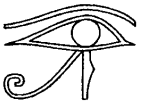
The *sa* sign, meaning "protection," represents a rolled-up herdsman's shelter.



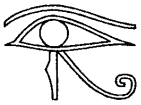


The *was* scepter, meaning "power," is a forked staff with an animal's head.





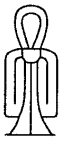
The *wedjat* eye, "the sound or restored one," used for protection against evil, is a human eye with the plumage marking of a Horus falcon's cheek.



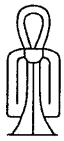


The *ka*, the life force of an individual, is represented by two extended arms seen from above.





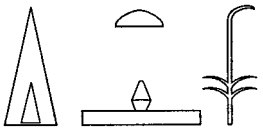
*Tyet*, the knot of the goddess Isis, resembling the knot in a sash of a robe, is a symbol of protection.



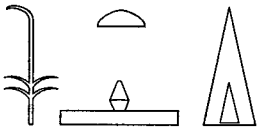


*Hetep*, meaning "offering" or, as a verb, "to be content": a conical loaf of bread on a reed mat.

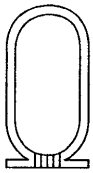




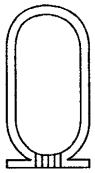
These glyphs mean "an offering that the king gives." The king is represented by the sedge plant. The word for king is always put at the beginning.

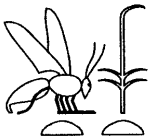


## Hieroglyphs Frequently Used for Royal Identification:

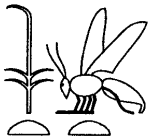


This sign (called a cartouche since the late eighteenth century) is an elongated version of the *shen* rope within which two of the king's names (his birth name and his throne name) were written.



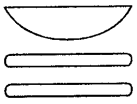


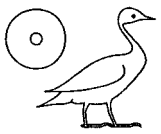
"He of the Sedge and the Bee" is a royal title meaning the king of Upper (the sedge plant) and Lower (the bee) Egypt.



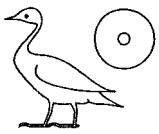


"Lord of the Two Lands," another royal title, is represented by the *neb* glyph, meaning "lord," and by two lines, representing the "Two Lands" (Egypt).





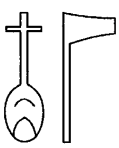
"Son [the duck] of Re [the solar disk]" is another title of the king.



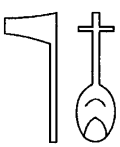


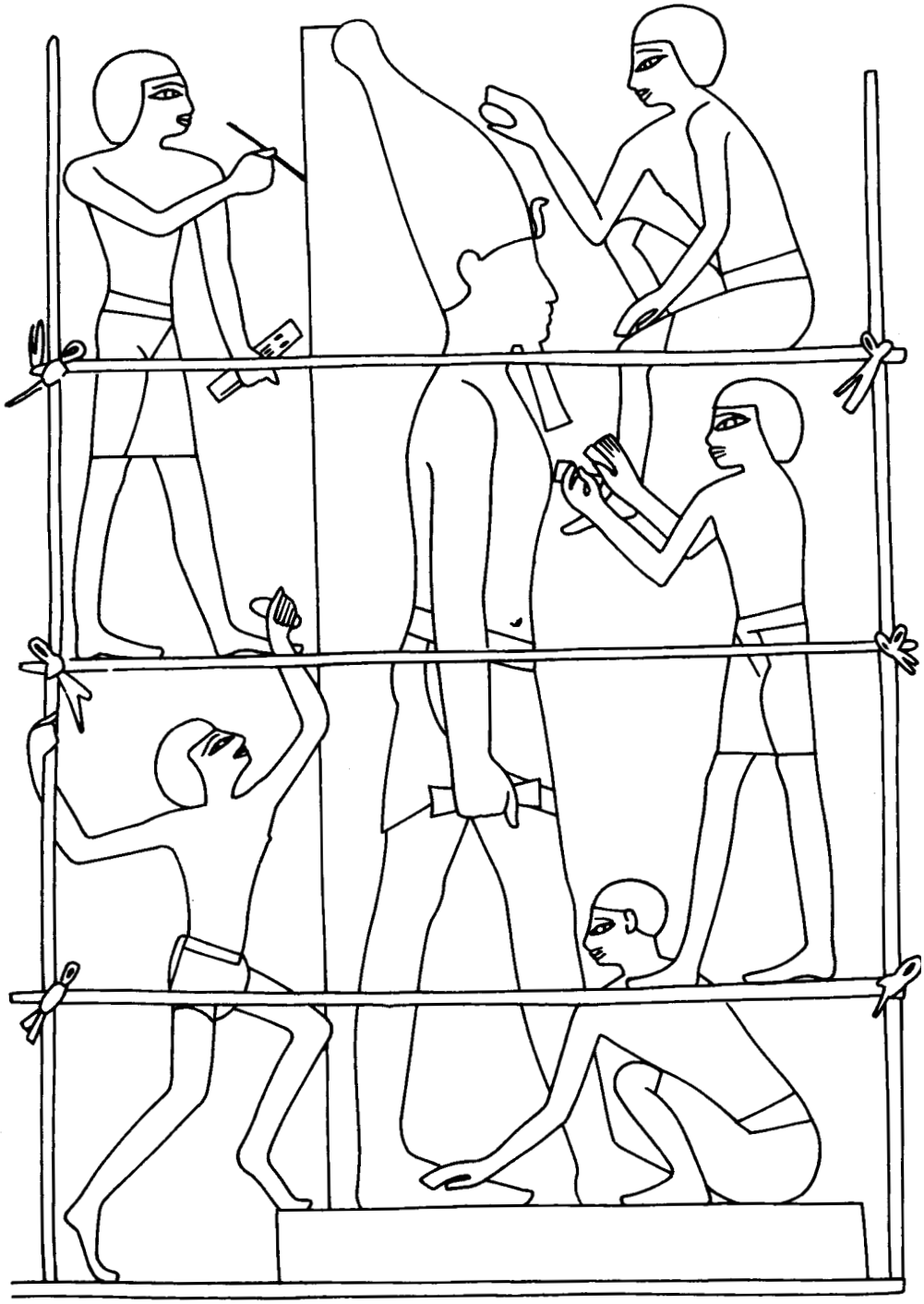
"Perfect, good, beautiful," pronounced *nefer*, a stylized image of the heart and windpipe, can also mean good fortune and happiness.





"The perfect god" is the *nefer* glyph with the word "god," which is the emblem of divinity, a cloth wound on a pole.





Sculptors polishing a colossal statue of Thutmosis III and a scribe drawing outlines for inscriptions to be carved on the back pillar. Line drawing after a painting in the tomb of Rekhmire.

# *Artists and Materials*

## ARTISTS

In ancient Egypt artists were basically included among craftsmen. There is, for instance, no separate word distinguishing sculptors and painters as a group from furniture makers and potters. On rare occasions designers of tomb reliefs were depicted—and their names mentioned—in a tomb, and there are also instances of inscriptions in which certain named artists claim to have been special favorites of the king. But as a rule artists worked like any other craftsmen, in a closely knit team under the ultimate supervision of an administrator, who was usually himself not an artist or craftsman. Free enterprise not really being known in ancient Egypt, craftsmen and artists were dependent on an institution such as the royal household, a temple, or the household of a dignitary to provide the raw materials, place of work, and the directives as to what works had to be created.

The workshops—as with everything in Egypt—were hierarchically structured with assistants and apprentices under the supervision of foremen and master craftsmen. But there was also division of labor. The relief decoration of a tomb, for instance, was first started by a designer/draftsman who would determine the general layout and draw the outlines of the figures. Then relief sculptors carved the figures, perhaps again in stages, with one group sculpting only the outlines and the next group modeling the interior details of the figures. Finally, painters colored the reliefs. In each group a master, or several masters, instructed and corrected the artists under them, perhaps drawing or carving important figures or parts of scenes themselves.

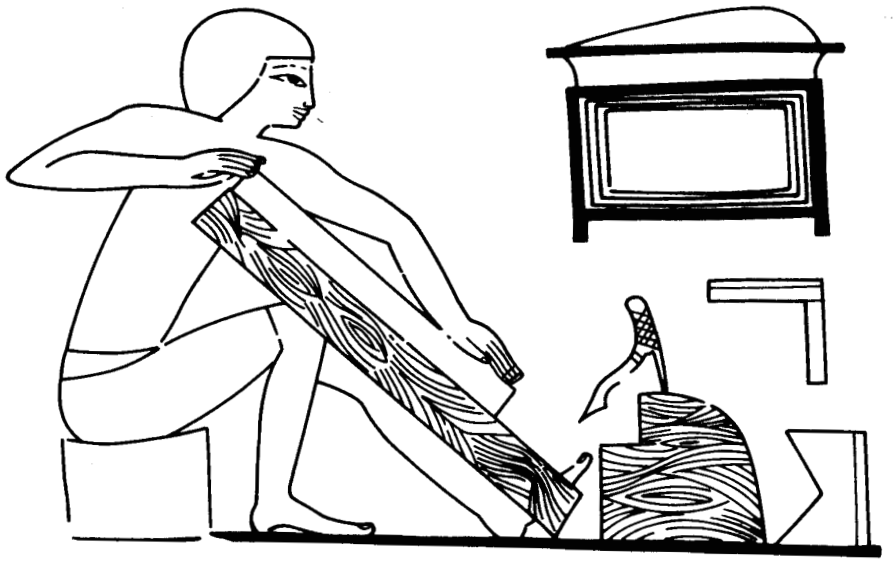
Since representations of sculptors creating statues in the round usually show several people at work on the same piece, it becomes a complicated matter to talk about "the" artist of a particular Egyptian work of art. In general, sculptures, reliefs, and paintings from ancient Egypt must be considered as works from a particular workshop, and their style and composition that of the workshop. Occasionally individual artists' "hands" might perhaps be detectable, but only after very detailed study.

## MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUES

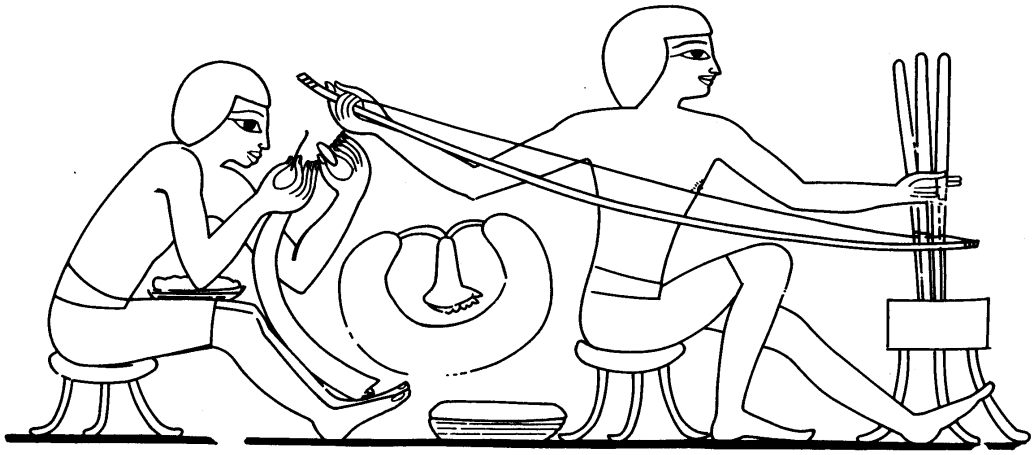
Because Egypt's climate is so dry, perishable artistic materials such as wood, leather, linen, and papyrus have survived in much greater quantities than in other ancient cultures; even remains of ancient food have been found in tombs.

### Stone

For the Egyptians the hardness and durability of stone symbolized permanence and eternity. Stone was, therefore, the material from which temples and tombs were built, while the dwellings of the living (ordinary houses as well as royal palaces) were built of mud brick. Along the Nile Valley there were plentiful supplies of limestone and sandstone, and there was granite at Aswan. Hard rocks



A cabinetmaker measuring wood to make a small chest like the one at upper right. His two essential tools, the adze and the carpenter's square, are also at right. Line drawing after a painting in the tomb of Rekhmire.



Jewelers at work: one bores holes in stone beads with a bow drill while another strings them to form a broad collar necklace. Line drawing after a painting in the tomb of Rekhmire.

such as gneiss and graywacke were available in the eastern desert mountains, and basalt was found north of the Faiyum. Egyptian sculptors first used only flint tools, then tools made of copper and, later, bronze. In the first millennium B.C. iron tools were added. However, in working the hardest stones, such as granite and diorite, sculptors sometimes used hard stone hammers lashed to wooden handles to pound the stone until it was close to the final shape of the sculpture. Then, for final shaping and smoothing, they would use very hard rubbing stones and fine sand pastes.

Although it is durable, stone is also brittle. When a stone sculpture is knocked over, it usually breaks, and small parts that project are often smashed beyond repair. For this reason many ancient stone sculptures are missing noses, fingers, beards, and so on. During pharaonic times facial features were sometimes obliterated on purpose by those who, for whatever reason, disliked or feared the person portrayed. Because of the ancient Egyptian belief that a statue contained the spirit of a person, it may be that noses were sometimes smashed to make it impossible for the figure to breathe, thereby killing it. Eyes, ears, and mouths may also have been defaced to destroy the senses.

Painters might be called upon to color limestone and sandstone sculptures, and relief was almost always painted. Usually a thin layer of gypsum plaster or gesso (chalk and glue) was applied first, then pigment of various colors (see pages 56–57). When the statue was of granite, gneiss, basalt, graywacke, or other hard stones that could take a fine polish, the piece was usually left unpainted except, perhaps, for the details of the eyes, headdress, and other adornments.

## Wood

Because of the arid climate, not many large trees grow in Egypt today, except for palms, which are too fibrous for carving. There were more trees in ancient times, especially in certain regions of Middle Egypt. Acacia and sycamore provided much of the wood used to make furniture and coffins, and also many statues and statuettes.

Artists used the trunks and branches of trees to make small statues. In making larger figures and wooden coffins, carvers had to peg pieces of wood together. Flint, copper, and bronze tools were used to cut away and shape the wood. These types of works were usually finely sanded or covered with plaster and painted (slide 10).

For large wooden constructions such as ships and architectural structures, and also for fine statues, furniture, and coffins, Egyptians imported wood from the cedar forests of Lebanon. Ebony and other types of hardwood imported from central Africa were the best woods available for the most beautiful statues and the finest furniture, which were often inlaid with precious metals and ivory.

## Metalworking

Gold was especially treasured. Its color and sheen symbolized the sun and, because gold does not tarnish, it was also a metaphor for eternal life. Gold was imported from Nubia and was mined in the Egyptian desert. Copper was obtained principally from Sinai. Tin probably had to be imported a great distance, either as pure tin or already alloyed with copper to make bronze. Most silver was imported, for example from western Asia or the Aegean. Metal objects were fabricated from sheet metal or were cast.

Jewelers in the royal workshops excelled in making gold cloisonné-inlay adornments such as pectorals, broad collar necklaces, bracelets, and diadems. Semiprecious stones or pieces of colored glass were cut in the required shapes and set within cells (called cloisons) formed by fusing thin strips of gold at right angles to a flat gold back piece (slide 17).

Bronze was used, among other materials, for tools, weapons, and armor from the Middle Kingdom onward. Before that time, and on occasion even during the Middle Kingdom, copper was the most common metal for tools and weapons. Being very valuable, copper and bronze were continually melted down and reused.

The history of copper alloy and bronze statuary is not yet fully clear. Only a few pieces have survived from before the Third Intermediate Period. We know that metalworkers cast solid or hollow figures using the lost-wax technique. In solid bronze casting, figures are usually first formed entirely in wax, including all the details. The wax then is covered with a layer of clay, and the form is fired, which causes the wax to melt and run out and the clay to turn into terracotta. Finally, molten metal is poured into the space where the wax was, and when it has completely cooled, the terracotta is broken away. Alternatively, with the more complicated procedure called hollow casting, the wax model is formed around an anchored clay core. This core remains as the inside of the metal statuette. This technique has the advantage of reducing the amount of metal necessary. In either technique, after cooling, the surface of the metal can be burnished, and details can be added with pointed tracing and chasing tools. For the bronze cat (slide 29), two molds were made, one for each half; after casting, the halves were soldered together.

## Painting

Egyptian artists usually decorated houses with striped dadoes; palace ceilings, floors, and walls were painted with elaborate designs and representations. Artists also painted the walls of temples and tombs, wooden and stone statues, and the surfaces of coffins, boxes, and furniture. Such surfaces were usually covered with a ground of mud plaster, gypsum plaster, or gesso, on which the designs were drawn and colored. Painted scenes and symbols of events in the afterlife were integral parts of funerary papyrus scrolls.

Pigments were made from various natural substances. Red and yellow generally came from ocher, found in abundance in the desert. White was often made from

gypsum, black from soot or manganese. Blue was mostly an artificial pigment called "Egyptian blue." This was made by heating a mixture of ground desert sand, natron, and a copper compound such as malachite. The resulting calcium-copper silicate frit (a grainy substance on the way to glass) was also used to create beads, small vessels, and figures. Yellow added to the blue frit produced green, which could also be ground malachite. To make paint, these substances were ground into powders and mixed with water to which a binder, such as a vegetable gum, was added to make the paint adhere to the surface.

## Faience

The Egyptian word for the material called "faience" by Egyptologists means "brilliant," and indeed the surface of fired faience objects is usually brilliant in color, most often blue or green. Egyptian faience is not, however, glazed earthenware like the "true" Italian faience (from Faenza). In fact, what Egyptologists call faience is not clay based but consists mainly of quartz. It was made from ground desert sand—which naturally contains some limestone, clay, and mineral particles—to which natron and water were added. Firing this paste produced the typical porous, whitish or grayish core of Egyptian faience.

The surface glaze was achieved in a number of ways. In one technique the coloring material (copper, often in the form of malachite) was added directly to the core paste, or ground mass, and during the drying and firing process the glaze formed by efflorescence on the surface (a process called self-glazing). Another self-glazing method, called cementation, consisted of placing the unglazed but dried faience object in a powder that, upon being heated, partially melted to form the glaze on the surface. Among other techniques was application of glaze with a brush or other instrument or by dipping the object into the glaze.

Objects made of faience were often molded; vases were usually turned on a wheel. Areas of different colors were produced by application of various colored glazes or inlay of differently colored pastes.



Guests playing draughts and musicians playing instruments.
Line drawing after a stone relief from the chapel of Nikahor
in the Metropolitan Museum's collection (acc. no. 08.201.2).



# IV. The Visual Materials

## *The Metropolitan Museum's Collection of Egyptian Art*

The Metropolitan Museum of Art has one of the finest collections of Egyptian art in the world. A great part of the thirty-six thousand objects in the collection was excavated in Egypt by the Museum's staff of archaeologists from 1906 to 1936. During the early decades of the twentieth century, the Egyptian government permitted foreign archaeologists to dig in their country with the following generous proviso: at the end of each excavation season there was a division of finds, half staying in Egypt and half going to the institution that had undertaken the excavation. The Egyptians had first choice of the objects and kept all unique pieces. As a result, many objects in the Metropolitan Museum have a direct counterpart in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. Other works of Egyptian art in the Metropolitan's collection have been given to or were purchased by the Museum.

An outstanding purchase is the nearly complete **tomb of Perneb**. The tomb was a mastaba (MAH-stah-bah; from the Arabic term for "bench"), a type of funeral monument in which underground rooms for the burial are surmounted by a rectangular structure with sloping sides. Like many other structures of this type, Perneb's mastaba was largely a solid block, filled with rubble. Only the mouths of two burial shafts and five chambers were spared from the fill. The most important room, an offering hall, was decorated with painted reliefs, whereas the decoration in the antechamber to this hall was left unsculpted, with outlined figures simply filled with a coloring wash. The story of how Perneb's tomb traveled from the Old Kingdom necropolis at Saqqara in Egypt to the Metropolitan Museum in New York is as follows. Over the course of about 4,500 years, blowing sands had so completely covered the tomb that its existence was no longer known. Additional sand and debris had been piled on top of it in later centuries by Egyptians searching for building stones and, at the beginning of the twentieth century, by archaeologists excavating adjoining tombs. So great was the weight of the rubble that the ceiling of Perneb's offering chamber broke, and the carved and painted walls collapsed inward.

The tomb was finally discovered in 1907. It could not be opened to the public, however, unless the offering chamber was cleared of debris and the walls dismantled to the foundations and then rebuilt from the ground up: a long, difficult, and expensive task. Other mastaba tombs at Saqqara had finer reliefs and did not need such extensive reconstruction. Consequently, in the spring of 1913 the Egyptian director general of antiquities decided to accept a proposal from the Metropolitan according to which the Museum would purchase the tomb of Perneb for shipment to New York. All the work of excavating and dismantling

the tomb was done by the Museum's archaeologists and their staff (see slides 1 and 2). A plan of the tomb of Perneb is on page 71. You may want to reproduce it for your class.

**The Temple of Dendur** came to the Museum as a gift. It was built as a shrine to the goddess Isis in about 15 B.C. by order of the Roman emperor Augustus not long after the Romans gained control of Egypt. The temple was built not only for the worship of the goddess but also to commemorate two brothers, sons of a Nubian chieftain, who were revered by the local population as saints.

The temple had to be dismantled and removed from its place in 1963 because the rising waters of the Nile behind the new Aswan High Dam would otherwise have submerged it. Two years later, in 1965, the government of Egypt offered the temple to the United States in its dismantled state in recognition for the aid America had provided toward saving a number of Nubian temples doomed to be permanently flooded by the construction of the High Dam. The temple blocks, which weighed more than eight hundred tons, were packed into some 640 crates and shipped by freighter to the United States. The Egyptian proposal specified that the Dendur temple be exhibited in an art or science museum and that it be maintained to ensure its permanent safety. President Lyndon Johnson appointed a commission to consider the best location. After a series of hearings, the president announced in April 1967 that it was to be placed in The Metropolitan Museum of Art (see slide 4).

In 1920 the Egyptian Art department's excavation staff made one of their most exciting discoveries when they explored the **tomb of Meketre**, a high official and chancellor under several kings of the late Eleventh and early Twelfth Dynasty. Meketre's tomb had been looted and defaced in antiquity, but a small chamber dug into the floor of the passage leading into the tomb had not been discovered. Within it were twenty-four painted wooden models of the finest craftsmanship. Their function was to provide Meketre's spirit with sustenance and magical assistance in the afterlife. Half of the models went to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo and half to the Metropolitan Museum, according to the agreement then in effect with the Egyptian government.

**The tomb of Wah**, overseer of Meketre's storehouse (slides 6–13), was near Meketre's tomb. It had also escaped the notice of grave robbers. It contained Wah's coffin and mummy and the remains of a funerary meal. In the division of finds at the end of the 1920 excavation season the Egyptian government allotted all the contents of Wah's tomb to the Metropolitan, where they are now on display with the Museum's Meketre models.

A plan of the tombs of Meketre and Wah is on page 77. You may want to photocopy it for your class. A second large cut-rock tomb, belonging to Inyotef, probably Meketre's son, is also indicated on the plan.

# *Poster Descriptions*

## Coffin set of Henettawy (Poster A)

Thebes, Deir el-Bahri, Dynasty 21, ca. 1040–992 B.C.
Gessoed and painted wood, l. 79 7/8 in.
Rogers Fund, 1925
25.3.182–184

The "mistress of the house and chantress of Amun-Re," Henettawy died, still in her twenties, during a time of political change (the so-called Third Intermediate Period). It was, however, a period when the art of coffin decoration was at its height. Such decoration was especially important at the time because no images enriched the simple underground chambers in which even high-status people were buried—often whole families together.

Besides her rather simple personal jewelry, Henettawy's main burial equipment was two splendid coffins and an innermost mummy lid, fitting one into the other like the parts of a Russian doll. Both coffins and the innermost lid are shaped like wrapped mummies with elaborate masks fastened over the heads. The decoration of the lids reflects royal coffins of an earlier age, which had gold masks and gold arm covers, mummy covers of precious materials such as gold inlaid with glass and semiprecious stones, snow-white and red-dyed cloth, and faience bead netting. The heads and upper bodies on Henettawy's coffins are enriched with wigs adorned with floral fillets, immense floral broad collars with Horus-head terminals, bracelets, armlets, rings, and rosette ear ornaments. Richly colored emblems are depicted as if fastened to the cloth wrappings just below the breasts; two *wedjat* eyes are seen on the outer coffin and winged scarabs appear on the second and innermost lids. Nut, the sky goddess, spreads her protective wings across the waist of the mummy images, and the goddesses Isis and Nephthys mourn the death of Henettawy and protect her feet on the two outer coffin lids.

The mummy represented on **the outer coffin lid** (left) wears an elaborate pectoral in the shape of a small shrine within which are two winged *wedjat* eyes, with uraeus images holding ankhs, and Horus falcons flanking a central scarab that pushes a sun disk upward, an image of the rising sun and of rebirth. The composition is similar to the pectoral of Sithathoryunet in slide 17. At the sides of this pectoral are figures of Anubis as a jackal wearing the crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt and holding empowering scepters. Beneath the protective wings of Nut, vertical and horizontal yellow bands (again representing gold) cover the white mummy wrapping. On the center band hieroglyphs read: "Recitation by the Osiris, housemistress and chantress of Amun-Re, king of the gods, Henettawy, justified, who says: 'O my mother Nut! Spread your wings over my face and cause me to be like the imperishable stars, like the unwearying stars, without dying a second time in the necropolis!'" In the rectangular spaces between the bands Henettawy in a rich golden garment shakes a sistrum and prays to Osiris (the two uppermost scenes), the four sons of Horus stand behind altars with offerings (middle scenes), and Anubis, god of the cemetery and mummification, holds empowering scepters in the bottom scenes.

**The second coffin lid** (center) is painted yellow all over, imitating royal coffins made of solid gold or gilded wood, like the famous coffins of Tutankhamun. The colorful hieroglyphs and figures would have been precious inlays. The pectoral is only slightly less elaborate than the one on the outer lid. Its main feature is again a large scarab that pushes a sun disk upward to symbolize the rising sun. On each side are enthroned figures of Osiris holding the crook and flail and wearing tall headdresses with ostrich-feather plumes (note his green flesh, symbolizing vegetation, which goes through a cycle of death followed by new growth, and thus represents the rebirth into life after death). Osiris is flanked by two winged goddesses, his sisters Isis and Nephthys, who raise one hand in adoration and sound their sistrums. In front of them are tiny *ba* spirits of Henettawy.



*Ba* Bird

On the central vertical band, beneath Nut with her outspread wings, are (from top to bottom) a shrine with two crouching figures of Osiris flanking a scarab, Isis and Nephthys adoring the symbol of Osiris (see slide 25), a scepter flanked by winged *wedjat* eyes, and a winged scarab above the boat of the sun. Note the recurrent representations of reed mats (shown as horizontal bars with vertical subdivisions), upon which high-status people sat and on which offerings were presented; protective cobras with sun-disk headdresses; floral designs; and the hieroglyphs for "stability" and "perfect" (see pages 50, 51). On each side of the central band are five pairs of shrines whose roofs are adorned with protective cobras. Pillars in the shape of the hieroglyph *djet*, for stability, support the roofs. In each shrine the image of a deity faces outward, where, at the edge of the coffin lid, Henettawy is seen shaking a sistrum, her hands raised in adoration. The deities she prays to are, from top to bottom, the solar gods Re and Re-Harakhty, the creator god Khnum (in the shape of a ram), the four sons of Horus (in charge of the deceased's organs), and Anubis, who sits in a much lower shrine and is adored by Henettawy's *ba*.

**The innermost coffin lid** (right) has no pectoral on a necklace. There are, however, two emblems of the scarab that pushes the sun disk, the lower one flanked by two Harakhty falcons that face winged cobras. The lower half of the lid is painted red, indicating a red-dyed cloth wrapping. Over the cloth is a bead netting in diamond patterns, symbolizing the feather garment of a goddess, and a single vertical yellow (gold) band on which is written a spell that Osiris utters on behalf of Henettawy.

The Egyptian appreciation for patterns is amply evident. Various rhythms are created by repetitions of actual objects, symbolic figures, and hieroglyphic signs. Note also the Egyptian appreciation for clarity and balance. The numerous floral and amuletic elements are clearly set off by thickly applied dark red, green, and black colors on the yellow background, which is glowingly enriched with the sheen produced by a colorless resin varnish. With all their richness and detail, however, the images are ordered and balanced throughout by their arrangement

in vertical and horizontal rows and by the framing bands with inscriptions. It is also interesting to note the differences among the three lids. The outer coffin lid has the most structured design with the figures standing out most clearly on the white background. The second lid is the most intricate, and the innermost the most subdued and simple. The three coffin lids are, in fact, instructive examples of the principle of variations on a given theme that is an important and constantly recurrent feature of Egyptian art.

## Canopic Jar Lid in the shape of a royal woman's head (Poster B)

Thebes, Tomb 55, Valley of the Kings, Dynasty 18,
Late reign of Akhenaten (ca. 1349—1336 B.C.) or later
Alabaster with glass and stone inlays
30.8.54
Theodore M. Davis Collection, Bequest of Theodore M. Davis, 1915

See slide 22 for the description and viewing notes.

Suggested Poster activities are on pages 145—146.



## *Slide Descriptions*

The works of art in the slides are arranged in three groups: slides 1–15, photographs of Museum excavations and related artworks; slides 16–29, royal art and images of deities; and slides 30–40, tomb equipment and ritual objects. The works of art in the second and third groups are arranged chronologically.

Please be familiar with the slides and slide descriptions before starting discussions with your class. The first thing to do is to ask the class to look at each slide thoroughly and describe what they see and what they think is happening. Beneath the slide descriptions are short sections entitled "Notice," "Discuss," and "Compare." They are designed to encourage students to become comfortable in talking about works of art, expressing their ideas about what the art means, and noticing how the formal elements make the meaning clear. You can use this same line of questioning in looking at actual works of Egyptian art in a museum.

> *"Notice" gives starting points to encourage the group to describe the work of art.*
>
> *"Discuss" suggestions help initiate dialogue about the function and meaning of the object. As the person who has read the slide description reveals more information about the work, there will be more discussion and further interpretations.*
>
> *"Compare" mentions other slides to look at. Comparing the similarities and differences between works of art makes it easier for students to see the distinctive features of each. You and your students will probably think of other interesting comparisons.*

The visual materials can be grouped by themes such as those listed below. Some of the exercises and discussions in section 7, "Activities," will prepare students to discuss these themes. You, or you in consultation with your class if that seems appropriate, can select the themes that are most interesting and that could provide a focus for a museum visit. You may lead the discussion yourself or assign one or more slides to students, so they can study the images and descriptions beforehand and be the "expert" when the class looks at them.

An assignment for older students could be to pass out copies of the texts describing the visual materials in this section. Assign reports (oral, written, or both) based on particular themes to individuals or small groups. Ask them to use the information in section 3 as well and to select appropriate images from the slides and poster.

The size of each work of art is noted to avoid misunderstandings about scale when looking at the slides. With the number one slot on the right side of the carousel, place the slides in the tray with the star on the slide frame showing at the top outside corner. If possible, use two projectors for the comparisons.

| Themes | Slides and other visual materials |
|---|---|
| cycles of life and death | 1–3, 7–13, 17, 22, 24, 25, 26, 31–33, 36, 38, 40, poster A, pages 19, 20, 27–29 |
| gods and goddesses | 4, 10, 17, 19, 21, 25, 27–29, 32, 38, 39, poster A, pages 20–27 |
| royalty | 14–17, 20–26, pages 29–32, poster B |
| order over chaos | 4, 18, 19, 21, 25, 34 |
| magic | 3, 4, 8–10, 13, 15–17, 19, 23–29, 31–34, 36–40, poster A |
| symbols and attributes | 8, 10, 13, 15–19, 21, 24–27, 32, 37–39, posters, pages 27, 29, 32 |
| animals | 10, 13, 16, 17, 19, 21, 25, 28–30, 32, 34–36, 38, 39, poster A, pages 20–22, 43 |
| the human figure | 10, 15, 18, 21, 24, 25, 27, 31, 33, 36, 37, 39, posters, pages 43, 44 |
| geometric basis and measured porportions | 3, 4, 15, 16, 19, 24, 31, 32, pages 38, 41 |
| balance and symmetry | 4, 15, 17, 19, 24, 25, 36, poster A, page 38 |
| scale | 10, 17, 23, 31, 33, 36, 39, poster A, page 44 |
| color | 5, 8–10, 17, 18, 27, 28, 32, 35, 36, poster A, page 45 |
| pose and gesture | 8–10, 15, 17, 18, 21, 24, 25, 28, 31–34, 36–39, poster A, page 37 |
| the human face | 16, 20–23, 40, posters |
| art and writing | 9, 15, 17, 22, 24, 25, 30, 32, 33, 37–39, poster A, pages 47–51 |
| artists/materials | 3, 4, 12, 15–18, 20, 21, 24, 26, 27–29, 32, 34–36, 38, 40, posters, pages 52–57 |
| families | 21–23, 25, 31, 33, 36, 37, 38, 39 |
| women | 4, 10, 14, 15, 17, 19, 20, 22, 25, 31, 36–38, posters, pages 9, 31 |
| costume and jewelry | 10, 13, 17, 22, 24, 27, 31, 36, 37, 38, posters, pages 56, 57 |
| furniture | 15, 19, 25, 33, 37 |
| music | 8, 37, poster A |
| the environment | 1, 3, 5–9, 14, 24, 30, 33–36, 38, pages 7, 19 |
| archaeology | 1–3, 6–15, 36, pages 59, 60, 143, 144 |





## 1. View of Saqqara

Photograph by the Egyptian Expedition, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1913

In the background is the step pyramid of King Djoser (ca. 2630–2611 B.C.), usually thought to be the earliest stone structure built by the Egyptians, nearly five thousand years ago. All around the pyramid complex are cemeteries where royal officials were buried throughout Egyptian history. Still visible are remains of Old Kingdom mastaba tombs. These had an underground chamber in which the deceased was placed and a rectangular aboveground structure with inclined sides. The mastabas were aligned along streets like houses and were meant to be eternal dwelling places for the dead. Over the centuries, windblown sand and debris partially and sometimes completely buried these mastabas.

In the middle ground on the right is the Museum excavation site. Note the tent and equipment on the sand. To the left of the camp the Museum archaeologists are looking down into a pit where they are clearing the sand away from the tomb of Perneb. Perneb lived at the end of the Fifth Dynasty (ca. 2350–2323 B.C.), almost three hundred years after King Djoser. Perneb had his tomb built near Djoser's pyramid complex because this was deemed to be sacred ground.

*Notice:* the site and the pyramid

*Discuss:* why the expedition photographer took the picture, what activities you can discern



## 2. Looking down into the tomb of Perneb

Photograph by the Egyptian Expedition, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1913

The area that the archaeologists were examining in slide 1 is the entrance courtyard of the tomb, shown here with two doors and a window opening into the offering hall of the tomb. In the center of the flat roof is an opening that resembles the top of a chimney but that is actually the top of the burial shaft, which descended fifty-five feet to the burial chamber. Study the plan of Perneb's tomb on page 71 to better visualize the layout.

When the mummy of Perneb and the possessions that were to accompany him in the afterlife had been placed in the burial chamber, the shaft was filled and sealed to hide its location from grave robbers. After the expedition photographer took this record shot, the archaeologists finished clearing away the sand that had accumulated around the tomb.

*Notice:* the layout of the tomb

*Discuss:* why the offering room has a window, why the body was hidden so far underground



## 3. Tomb of Perneb

Saqqara, end of Dynasty 5, ca. 2350–2323 B.C.
Limestone (partially painted), h. 16 ft. 7/8 in.
Edward S. Harkness Gift, 1913
13.183.3

When the numbered stones arrived at the Museum, the staff rebuilt the tomb at the entrance to the Egyptian galleries. You can go inside the rooms and examine the carvings on the offering-chamber walls and the painted scenes in the antechamber and entrance passage.

The Egyptians thought of a tomb as the eternal dwelling place for the deceased. With its doors and window, Perneb's tomb imitated ancient mud-brick houses. (Such houses are still built in Egypt today.) Note the rectangular niche that frames the central door, which leads into the offering chamber. On both sides of the door low-relief carvings of Perneb face the entrance. The images retain faint traces of the original paint. Over the two figures' heads hieroglyphic inscriptions, their red pigment now barely visible, list Perneb's titles as chamberlain and courtier to the king.

The carvings within the offering chamber, which preserve much more of the original color, portray mortuary priests and men carrying offerings of food and drink toward Perneb, who sits before an offering table in a pose similar to that of the seated official in slide 33. On the far wall is a carving of a false door through which the Egyptians believed the spirit of the deceased could pass in order to receive the offerings. The hieroglyphs that surround it record Perneb's status among the blessed dead as a gift of the king and the gods.



Drawing of a figure of Perneb from the false door and facade of his tomb.

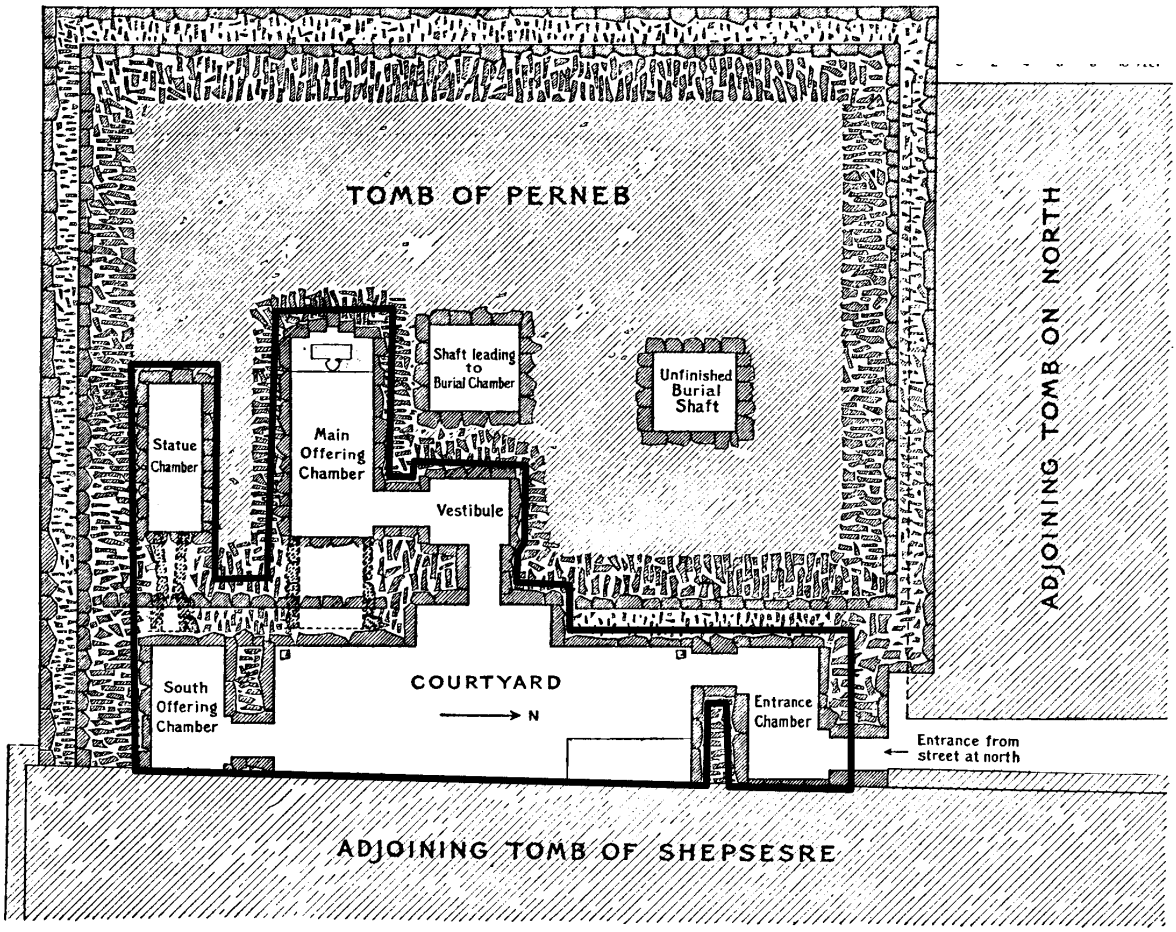
The doorway on the right was the original entrance into the courtyard and tomb, since the walls projecting on the right and left sides originally abutted against the wall of another mastaba that blocked the courtyard on what is now the open front side. In the chamber on the left a small opening in the back wall provides a view into an inner chamber called a *serdab*. Here, originally, a

wooden statue of Perneb was placed. Through the opening in the wall the statue could smell the aroma of incense that was burned in the front room. This arrangement reminds us that, in the Old Kingdom, statues of nonroyal persons were not made to be seen but to provide a place of materialization for the deceased's spirit. (See the plan of the tomb on page 71.)

*Notice:* doors, windows

*Discuss:* function of the chambers, how the stones were cut to fit together, what the shape was for both solids and voids (the rectangle), what the front of the tomb resembles and why, why Egyptians still build houses with thick walls and small windows

# Plan of the Tomb of Perneb




The thick black line encloses the part of Perneb's tomb that was moved from Egypt to New York. The lightly shaded area within the outer walls and beneath the flat stone-covered roof was completely filled with rubble and sand. Perneb's burial shaft is on the right side of the offering-chamber walls. The unfinished shaft was intended for a member of Perneb's family but, for unknown reasons, was never occupied. The adjoining tomb of Shepsesre was probably built earlier for Perneb's parents.



## 4. The Temple of Dendur

Nubia, ca. 15 B.C.
Sandstone, l. (from gate to rear of temple) 82 ft.
Given to the United States by Egypt in 1965, awarded to The Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1967, and installed in The Sackler Wing in 1978
68.154

Egyptian temples were not simply houses for a cult image but also represented in their design and decoration a variety of religious and mythological concepts. One important symbolic aspect was based on the understanding of the temple as an image of the natural world as the Egyptians knew it. Lining the temple base are carvings of papyrus and lotus plants that seem to grow from water, symbolized by figures of the Nile god, Hapy. The two columns on the porch rise toward the sky like tall bundles of papyrus stalks with lily flowers bound up with them. Above the gate and temple entrance are images of the sun disk flanked by the outspread wings of Horus, the sky god. The sky is also represented by the vultures, wings outspread, that appear on the ceiling of the entrance porch.

On the outer walls—between earth and sky—are carved scenes of the king making offerings to deities, who hold scepters and the symbol of life. The figures are carved in sunk relief. In the brilliant Egyptian sunlight shadows cast along the figures' edges would have emphasized the outlines of their forms. Isis, her husband and brother Osiris, their son Horus, and the other deities are identified by their headdresses. These scenes are repeated again and again in two horizontal registers. The king is identified by his crowns and by his names, which appear close to his head in elongated oval shapes called cartouches, but many cartouches simply read "pharaoh." This king was actually Emperor Augustus of Rome, who, as recent master of Egypt, wisely had himself depicted in the traditional regalia of the pharaoh. Augustus had many temples erected in Egyptian style, honoring Egyptian deities. This small temple, built about 15 B.C., honored the goddess Isis and, beside her, two deified sons of a local Nubian chieftain, Pedesi and Pihor.

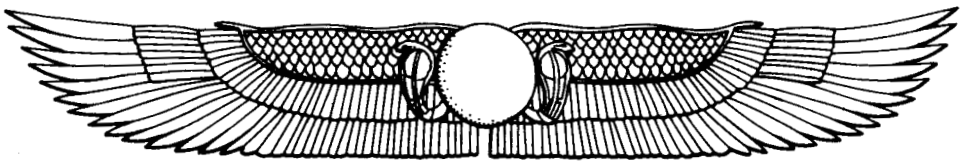
In the first room of the temple reliefs again show the "pharaoh" praying and offering to the gods, but the relief here is raised from the background so that

the figures can easily be seen in the more indirect light. From this room one can look into the temple past the middle room used for offering ceremonies and into the sanctuary of the goddess Isis. The only carvings in these two rooms are around the door frame leading into the sanctuary and on the back wall of the sanctuary, where a relief of offerings being made to Isis appears. Originally all the carving was painted in red, blue, green, yellow, and black—traces remained even less than a hundred years ago—but after the erection of a low dam at Aswan early in the twentieth century, backed-up waters of the Nile washed the last traces of colors away.

The temple, with its gate facing the Nile, was built into a hillside in Upper Nubia where the river valley is very narrow. Originally the gate was set in a high wall of mud bricks that surrounded the temple, but gradually recurrent high water destroyed the wall.

*Notice:* the rectangular shape of the temple, the doorways, and the gate; the carving over the gate

*Discuss:* symbolism, types of relief carving, colors



Winged Sun Disk



## 5. View of Luxor looking west across the Nile

Photograph by John G. Ross

Thebes (now Luxor), the capital of Egypt during the early Middle Kingdom and again in the New Kingdom, continued to be an important administrative and religious site throughout the rest of its history. It is the site of many of the finest ancient temples and tombs. The city of the living was on the east bank of the Nile, where today the temples of Luxor and Karnak are visited by millions of tourists every year. On the west bank beyond the green cultivated land are cliffs and wadis (dry riverbeds), where the people of ancient Thebes buried their dead. At the base of the first line of cliffs on the right is the mortuary temple of Queen Hatshepsut (slide 14). The hills and cliffs on both sides of the temple are tunneled with tombs of ancient officials. Behind the cliffs is the famous Valley of the Kings, where pharaohs of the New Kingdom were buried.

The cultivated land, the river, desert, and sky appear in horizontal bands. Perhaps such views helped to inspire the Egyptians to portray figures and events in horizontal registers on the walls of temples and tombs.

*Notice:* the river, narrowness of the cultivated land, the desert

*Discuss:* where the Valley of the Kings and Hatshepsut's temple are in this photograph, why Egyptian burial sites were in the desert



## 6. Tomb of Meketre, Thebes

Photograph by the Egyptian Expedition, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1920

Museum archaeologists worked at Thebes for about thirty years. They made one of their most remarkable finds inside the cut-rock tomb of a Theban official named Meketre (MEH-ket-RAY), who was buried just after 2000 B.C. The entrance to his tomb was on the terrace (in shadows in this photograph) at the top of a sloping causeway.

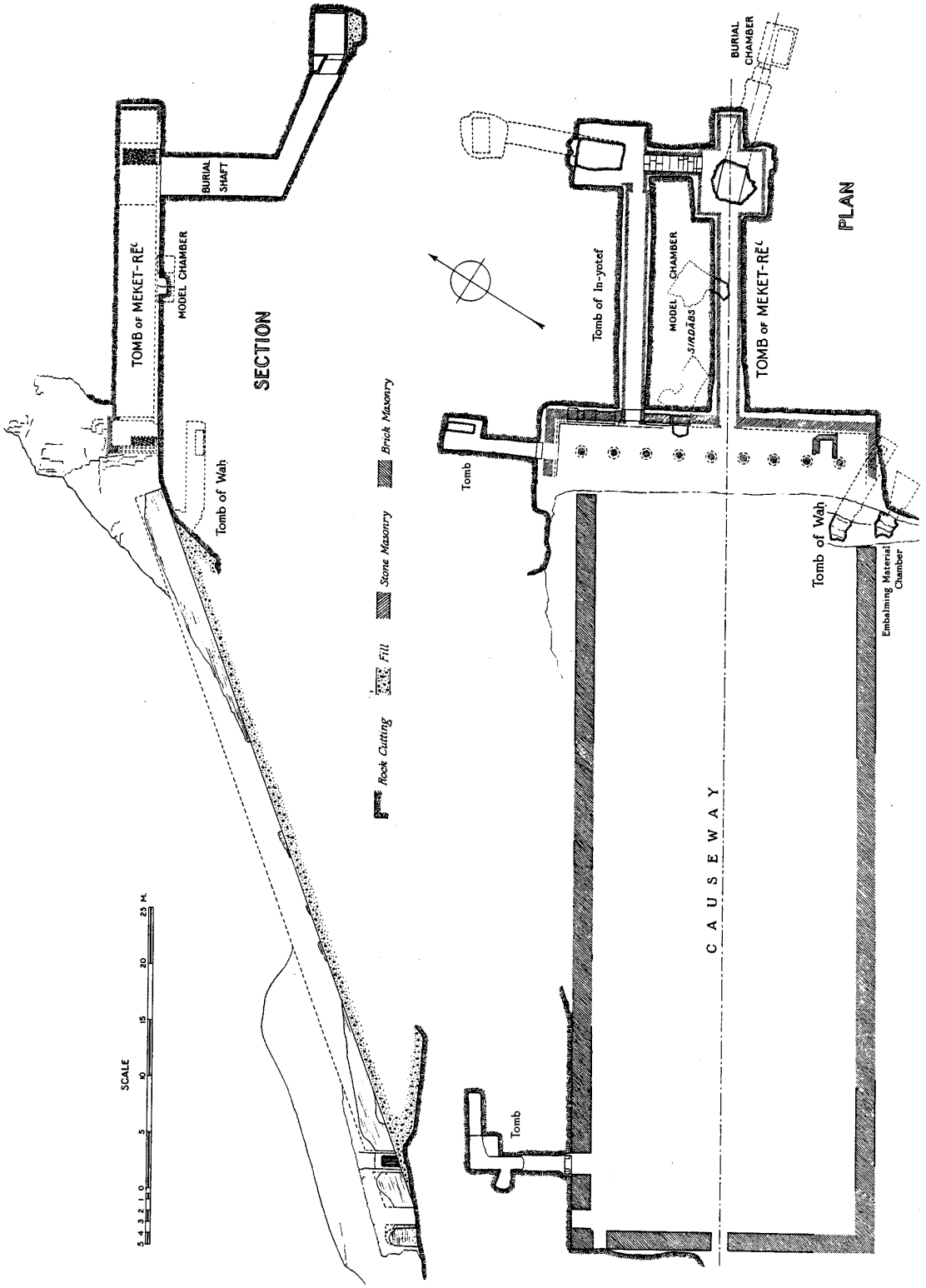
The archaeologists knew that Meketre's tomb had been robbed in ancient times. However, while cleaning the area in order to draw an exact plan of the tomb, they discovered two places the grave robbers had missed. One was the small burial chamber of Meketre's storehouse manager Wah, whose tomb was cut into the hillside just to the right of the top of Meketre's causeway. The second was a small chamber hidden in the floor of the passageway inside Meketre's tomb.

*Notice:* what can be seen in the photograph

*Discuss:* plan of tomb (be sure to have copies of the plan on page 77)

*Compare:* slides 2 and 3 and plan of Perneb's tomb

# Plan and Section of the Tombs of Meketre and Wah




54. Plan and section of the tomb of Meket-Rē'



## 7. View inside the chamber of Meketre's tomb

Photograph by the Egyptian Expedition, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1920

This photograph, taken by the excavation photographer, shows what the archaeologists saw when they had dismantled a mud-brick wall that closed the entrance to the hidden chamber. Although the contents were slightly jumbled due to a partial ceiling collapse, no one had entered the chamber since it had been sealed almost four thousand years earlier. Packed tightly into the space were twenty-four painted wooden models of boats, offering bearers, and buildings containing craftsmen and preparers of food. A model of a walled garden is visible on the upper right, and in the back of the room on the left is a large wooden figure of a female offering bearer.

These models are highly valued because of the quality of the carving and painting and because they are remarkably well preserved. The colors, the linen garments on some of the figures, and most of the twine rigging on the boats are original. They tell us in great detail about the raising and slaughtering of livestock, storage of grain, making of bread and beer, and design of boats in Middle Kingdom Egypt. On another level of meaning, they tell us about the Egyptian belief that images could magically provide safe passage to the afterlife and eternal sustenance once there.

*Notice:* contents of the chamber

*Discuss:* why the models were in the tomb, why they are so well preserved (the dry climate)



## 8. Riverboat

Thebes, tomb of Meketre, early Dynasty 12, ca. 1985 B.C.
Gessoed and painted wood, l. 50 3/8 in.
Rogers Fund and Edward S. Harkness Gift, 1920
20.3.1

Meketre is shown seated, smelling a lotus blossom, in the shade of a small cabin, which, on an actual boat, would have been made of a light wooden framework with linen or leather hangings. Here the hangings have been partly rolled up to let the breeze through. Wooden shields covered with bulls' hides are painted on each side of the roof. A singer, with his hand to his lips, and a blind harpist entertain Meketre on his voyage. Standing in front of them is the ship's captain, with his arms crossed over his chest. He may be depicted awaiting orders, but he may also pay homage to the deceased Meketre.

As the twelve oarsmen propel the boat, a lookout in the bow holds a weighted line used to determine the depth of the river. At the stern, the helmsman controls the rudder. A tall white post amidships supported a mast and sail (not found in the tomb), which would have been taken down when the boat was rowed downstream—as it is here—against the prevailing north wind. Going south (upstream), with the wind behind it, the boat would have been sailed and the oarsmen could rest.

The boat is similar to one Meketre might have used in his lifetime. Certain details, however, suggest that on this voyage Meketre is traveling toward the afterlife. For instance, he holds and sniffs a fragrant blue lotus blossom, which opens its petals every morning toward the rising sun, thus signifying the hope of rebirth. Also, in Egyptian literature, a blind harpist sings of the transience of life.



Lotus

*Notice:* activities, colors, materials

*Discuss:* the two levels of meaning, why the Meketre models are so highly valued

*Compare:* slides 5 and 36



## 9. Granary

Thebes, tomb of Meketre, early Dynasty 12, ca. 1985 B.C.
Gessoed and painted wood, l. 29 1/8 in.
Rogers Fund and Edward S. Harkness Gift, 1920
20.3.11

With the exception of the doorkeeper who guards the entrance, all the occupants in the first room of this model are scribes, as indicated by their writing equipment. The scribes on one side write on boards while those on the other write on papyrus scrolls. Each has a palette—a rectangular board with a slot to hold reed brushes and two depressions to hold red and black ink.

The grain was measured as it was brought from the field and again as it was taken away to be made into bread and beer, staples of the Egyptian diet. All transfers of grain would have been recorded by the scribes. Such records allowed administrators to calculate available supplies. Since the Egyptians did not have coinage until Greco-Roman times (after 332 B.C.), grain was also a commodity used for expressing the value of goods. Other such commodities included copper or silver.

In the main part of the granary workers are pouring sacks of grain into large storage bins. Husks of real grain still lie in the bottoms of these bins. Mouse droppings found by the excavators indicate that most of the ancient grain was eaten soon after it was buried.

*Notice:* activities

*Discuss:* poses denoting different occupations, why fragile materials such as painted wood and linen are preserved in Egypt (the dry climate)

*Compare:* slides 24 and 33



## 10. Statuette of an offering bearer

Thebes, tomb of Meketre, early Dynasty 12,
ca. 1985 B.C.
Gessoed and painted wood, h. 44 1/8 in.
Rogers Fund and Edward S. Harkness Gift, 1920
20.3.7

The figure holds a live duck by its wings in one hand and balances a basket of foodstuffs on her head with the other. In rural areas Egyptians still carry heavy loads on their heads, as do people in many parts of the world.

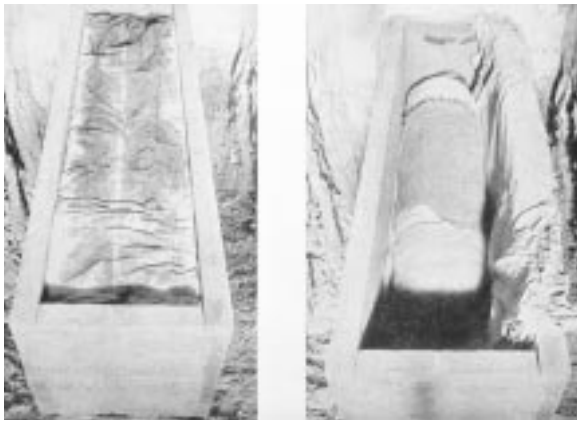
This figure is larger than the others because she embodies the products of an entire estate that Meketre determined to be the source that would provide offerings for his funeral cult in perpetuity. Her size, broad collar necklace, bracelets, anklets, and dress indicate her importance. The patterns on her dress represent small feathers, and the vertical stripes of the underskirt, long wing feathers. Goddesses are frequently portrayed in similar costumes. Here the dress probably refers to Isis or Nephthys, both of whom protected the dead in the afterlife. Interestingly, because the action of offering is important, offering women may stride—a pose usually reserved for men. The companion figure in Cairo is dressed in a garment made of bead netting.

Since this statue is made of wood, it must have been carved from the roughly cylindrical shape of a tree trunk, yet the squared base and the frontal, balanced pose conform to the rectilinear style of stone sculpture. Unlike the case in stone sculpture, however, in wooden figures the space between body and limbs is open, creating a more lifelike appearance. The colors and patterns, as well as the figure's large eyes and slender, subtly naturalistic form, are arresting. The gray-green color, especially on the wig but also on the garment, originally may have been blue, the hair color of deities. The arms, base, duck figure, and basket were made separately, then attached to the body.

*Notice:* pose, costume, colors, materials, contrasts

*Discuss:* what looks Egyptian about the figure, significance of size, symbolism, function

*Compare:* slides 15, 27, 28, and 39



## 11. The discovery of Wah's mummy

Photograph by the Egyptian Expedition, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1920

These expedition photographs show the small side tomb to Meketre's large resting place that the ancient looters missed. In the photograph on the left the archaeologists have just set aside the lid of the wooden coffin. On the right they have removed thirty linen sheets that were folded on top of the mummy for protection and use in the afterlife. Part of the hieroglyphic writing on the outside of the coffin identified the occupant as Wah, an overseer of Meketre's storehouse.

The rest of the inscription is the first part of a formula recording the royal gift of food for the afterlife. This formula is repeated in slightly varying forms from the Old Kingdom onward, the standard form being: "An offering the king gives—an offering of a thousand loaves of bread and jars of beer, a thousand of cattle and fowl, a thousand lengths of linen cloth and alabaster vessels, a thousand of all good and pure things upon which a spirit lives, to be given to the *ka* [spirit] of [the deceased]" (in this case, Wah). To the side of the coffin, not visible in the photographs, archaeologists found the dried remains of a leg of beef and a loaf of bread, and a jug containing a dried residue of beer. This had been deposited freshly brewed. During the fermenting process the expanding beer had pushed off the lid and rolled the jar over. The dried beer then formed a crust on the chamber floor where it had spilled.

*Notice:* photographic sequence, size of tomb chamber

*Discuss:* why Wah's tomb was close to his master's, why food was in the tomb



Hieroglyph for "Thousand"



## 12. Unwrapping Wah's mummy

Photograph by the Egyptian Expedition, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1940

Nearly twenty years after Wah's mummy and burial equipment had been shipped to New York, the Museum staff X-rayed the mummy. The X-ray plates revealed dark shadows around Wah's neck, wrists, and ankles, indicating that jewelry had been placed on the body. The decision was made to unwrap Wah, a process shown in this slide. As the linen shrouds were carefully removed, the whole cartonnage (like papier-mâché but made with linen and gesso) mask with its stylized wig and broad collar necklace became visible. The center photo shows a layer of bandages soaked in resin, which may have been intended to protect the body from malevolent spirits. Below the resin layer were four bead necklaces. After more layers of linen bandages were unwrapped, another layer of resin-soaked bandages was found, wrapped separately around the arms and legs, preserving the mummy's human form. A broad collar and anklets of turquoise-blue beads were partly stuck in the resin. When the body had been completely unwrapped, it was given to the American Museum of Natural History for study.

*Notice:* photo sequence, position of the jewelry

*Discuss:* why archaeologists work slowly, taking detailed notes and many photographs

*Compare:* the different mummy enclosures of Henettawy (poster)



## 13. Wah's jewelry

Thebes, tomb of Wah, early Dynasty 12, ca. 1985 B.C.
Faience, silver, gold, carnelian, lapis lazuli, and other semiprecious stones; collar necklace, w. 15 1/4 in.
Rogers Fund, 1940
40.3.1–19

In ancient Egypt both men and women wore jewelry for adornment, magical protection, and as a symbol of status. Broad collar necklaces must have been particularly popular because from the earliest times they are worn by the principal figures in sculpture and wall paintings. Wah, however, could not have worn the turquoise-colored broad collar in life because there is no clasp and the ties are not strong enough to hold it on. It was made of many faience beads specifically for his burial and was simply placed on the front of the mummy while it was being wrapped.

Although Wah was only a minor official he possessed one gold and one silver necklace as well as three scarabs. The two silver scarabs are, in fact, among the finest extant from Egypt. Scarabs, often found in burials, are magic symbols of renewed life. They are beetle-shaped amulets that the Egyptians associated with rebirth because they saw how beetles of this species roll balls of dung, from which newborn beetles emerge. The flat undersides of the amulets were also used as seals. Many—especially in the Middle Kingdom—are incised with names and titles of officials. These designs were pressed into wet mud that was used to seal boxes, bags, and letters. Wah's large silver scarab is inlaid on the wings with Wah's name and that of Meketre, whose property he administered. On the underside a scroll design with the hieroglyphs for life and protection could be used for sealing. Before Wah's silver scarabs were placed with his mummy their heads were destroyed by grinding. This was done either to protect the deceased from insect bites or to "kill" the beetles and so ensure that they would follow the deceased into the afterlife.

*Notice:* types of jewelry, where on the body they were worn, variety of materials

*Discuss:* function, symbolism

*Compare:* slides 10, 17, 22, 32, and 37, poster



One of Wah's Scarabs



**14. Discovery of fragments of Hatshepsut's sculpture, Thebes**

Photograph by the Egyptian Expedition, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1929

Museum archaeologists made another remarkable discovery at Thebes, this one while they were digging near a temple erected in Dynasty 18 (ca. 1470–1460 B.C.) by Queen Hatshepsut (hat-SHEP-soot). It was her mortuary temple and a sanctuary for Amun (AH-moon), whose cult image visited the site once a year in a portable boat-shaped shrine. The archaeologists unexpectedly came upon hundreds of fragments of stone sculpture that had been buried in ancient times. Hatshepsut's name was inscribed on most of the sculpture—notice the broken statue of a sphinx. These inscriptions proved that the statues had originally been placed in and around her temple (seen in the background of the slide at the left).

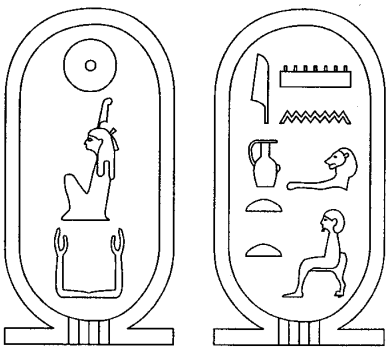
This photograph shows members of the Egyptian expedition staff sorting fragments according to the types of stone (limestone or granite), parts of the body (hands, faces, arms, etc.), and adornment (crowns, kilts, scepters, etc.) before attempting to reconstruct the statues. This process was not unlike working on a very large and difficult jigsaw puzzle. The work was much more frustrating, however, because over the centuries many of the stone pieces had been lost.

Hatshepsut was one of the most important ruling women in Egyptian history. After the death of her husband, Thutmosis II, she first ruled as regent for her nephew and stepson, Thutmosis III, who was a child at the time. Within a short time, however, Hatshepsut, herself the daughter of Thutmosis I, declared herself co-ruler, adopting a king's titles and regalia. For twenty years she ruled together with Thutmosis III as senior of the two pharaohs. After her death Thutmosis III expanded Egypt's sphere of influence in western Asia by a series of brilliant military campaigns. Hatshepsut's own drive had been directed mainly southward, as testified by the expedition she sent to Punt (Somalia). Some twenty years after Hatshepsut's death, when Thutmosis had been king on his own for a long time, he ordered her name to be erased wherever it appeared and her statues to be smashed. The reasons for this are not entirely clear, but the order may have been politically motivated and not a belated act of personal hatred.

*Notice:* stone fragments, temple site

*Discuss:* how the archaeologists knew the statues belonged to Hatshepsut, why the statues might have been broken and buried (the exact reasons are not known)

*Compare:* slide 5



Cartouches of Hatshepsut



## 15. Statue of Hatshepsut

Thebes, Deir el-Bahri, Dynasty 18, ca. 1473–1458 B.C.
Limestone (originally painted), h. 76 3/4 in.
Rogers Fund, 1929
29.3.2

Traditionally, the rulers of Egypt were male. Consequently, when Hatshepsut assumed the titles and functions of king she was portrayed in royal male costumes. Such representations were political statements, not reflections of the way she actually looked. In this finely carved sculpture she sits upon a throne and wears the royal kilt and the striped *nemes* (NEM-iss) headdress with the uraeus (cobra) and is bare chested like a man. However, she does not wear the royal beard, and the proportions of her body are delicate and feminine.

Reading from the top down, the hieroglyphic inscriptions on the left side of the throne say "the good goddess" and "lady of the Two Lands" (Upper and Lower Egypt). On the right side Hatshepsut is described as the "daughter of Re." Small hemisphere glyphs (for "t") indicate the female gender of these royal titles. It is thought that while the main sanctuary of the temple was dedicated to the god Amun-Re, this sculpture of the queen was placed in that chamber on the south side of the temple, where Hatshepsut's personal funerary cult had its place.

A sense of royal dignity, composure, and permanence is created by the facial expression, the static pose, and the rectangular throne and high base from which the symmetrical and frontal figure emerges. Cracks in the face, neck, and torso indicate ancient damage sustained by the sculpture. In fact, only the head, forearms, and parts of the throne were excavated by the Museum archaeologists. The body had already been found in 1843–45 by a German expedition and became part of the collection of the Egyptian Museum in Berlin. The Berlin museum agreed to exchange the body of our statue for the body of a sphinx—also found by Metropolitan Museum archaeologists—that fit

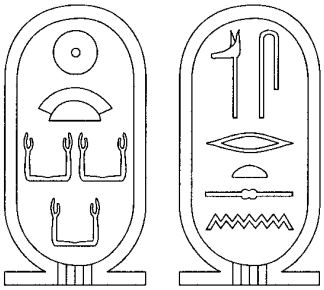
the head of a sphinx in their museum, and so it was possible to restore the Berlin and the New York statues to almost their original states. The left eye of the Metropolitan's seated Hatshepsut was recently restored by Museum conservators.

*Notice:* pose, costume, broken features

*Discuss:* what indicates this figure is a "king," what is missing from the front of the *nemes* crown, what looks Egyptian about the figure

*Compare:* slides 19, 31, and 33





Cartouches of Senwosret III

## 16. Sphinx of Senwosret III

Dynasty 12, ca. 1878–1841 B.C.
Gneiss, l. 28 3/4 in.
Gift of Edward S. Harkness, 1917
17.9.2

Because of their strength and ferocity, their imposing manes and awesome roar, lions were associated with kingship since prehistoric times; as divine guardians against evil they also symbolized in cosmic myths that place on the horizon where the sun is reborn every morning. The sphinx, a lion with a human head, is a complex image in which the royal aspect of the lion is reinforced by the recognizable face of a ruling king without losing its associations with the rising sun and divine guardianship. In this sphinx with the face of one of the greatest kings of Egypt, Senwosret III (sen-WAHS-ret), the body of the crouching lion and the human face are simplified but essentially naturalistic. The sculptor has convincingly joined the different parts by covering the head and shoulders with a stylized lion's mane and the striped *nemes* headdress with the awe-inspiring fire-spitting cobra (its head now missing) on the front. The actual headdress would have been made of starched linen. Another exclusive adornment of the king was the rectangular false beard.

The individuality of Senwosret's careworn face is unusual in Egyptian art, but seemingly distinctive features are typical of the royal heads of the later Twelfth Dynasty. It is not known whether the expressive lines of his face imitate actual physical characteristics or whether they may express the king's concern for his people.

The smooth surfaces of this extremely hard type of stone contrast with the detailed patterns of the headdress, royal beard, and stylized lion's mane. Notice how the sculptor took advantage of the dark curving vein in the stone to suggest the volumes of the lion's body.

*Notice:* human-animal combination, missing parts

*Discuss:* meaning of the sphinx, royal insignia, surfaces, grain of stone, contrasts, expression

*Compare:* slides 15, 19, and 26



## 17. Pectoral of Princess Sithathoryunet

Lahun, Dynasty 12, reign of Senwosret II, ca. 1897–1878 B.C.
Gold, carnelian, feldspar, garnet, and turquoise; l. 3 1/4 in.
Rogers Fund and Henry Walters Gift, 1916
16.1.3

This centerpiece of a princess's necklace is composed around the throne name of King Senwosret II. It was found among the jewelry of Princess Sithathoryunet (sit-hathor-you-net) in a special niche of her underground tomb beside the pyramid of Senwosret II at Lahun. Hieroglyphic signs are amply used in the design, and the whole might actually be read as a text saying, "The god of the rising sun grants life and dominion over all that the sun encircles for one million one hundred thousand years [i.e., eternity] to King Khakheperre [Senwosret II]."

The deity of the rising sun is present in the two falcons that flank the name of the king, sun disks on their heads and the circular hieroglyphic sign for "dominion over time and space" clutched in their claws. Royal cobras, whose tails encircle the sun disks, hold the king's cartouche upright, and signs of life (ankhs) hanging from the looped cobra bodies also flank the royal name. The cartouche rests on the bent tops of palm fronds (signs for "year") that are held by a kneeling Heh, god of eternity and sign for "one million." A tadpole (sign for "one hundred thousand") dangles from the god's right elbow.

The symbolism of the design, however, goes beyond this simple text. Notice that the whole group of figures rests on a rectangular bar that is characterized as a reed mat by vertical divisions. The Egyptians used such mats as floor covers for high-status people to sit on and as trays for offerings. This particular mat, decorated with zigzag lines signifying water, is actually a representation of the primeval water from which the earth rose at creation. With the water at the bottom and the sun disks at the top, the pectoral design depicts the world as the Egyptians knew it.

Also significant is the heraldic character of the symmetrical configuration. With pairs of identical figures and emblems facing each other across a central motto, the device is remarkably like a coat of arms of medieval European

times. Like all heraldic ensigns, the pectoral proclaims a program: the program of Egyptian kingship. The pharaoh surrounded and protected by gods guarantees the ever renewed creation of life and order in perpetuity.

The pectoral is a masterpiece of Egyptian jewelry making at its peak. The goldsmith—surely from the royal workshop—set 372 precisely cut pieces of semiprecious stone into tiny cloisons that he had formed from bands of sheet gold set on edge and fused to gold backing plates. The various colored stones bring this filigree of gold to brilliant life.

*Notice:* materials, figures, design, feather patterns, colors

*Discuss:* symmetry, symbolism, the original owner, craftsmanship, relationship of art and writing

*Compare:* slides 4, 10, 13, 25, and 36



## 18. Fragment of a battle scene

Thebes, Asasif, Dynasty 18, probably reign of Thutmosis IV (ca. 1400–1390 B.C.)
Painted sandstone, 24 x 45 1/4 in.
Rogers Fund, 1913
13.180.21

This stone block was once part of a large battle relief portraying the king riding in a chariot over wounded, dying, and defeated foes. The curving bellies of the two chariot horses are just visible at the top. More than a military victory, the scene—most probably originally on the outside of a temple—symbolized the king triumphing over the forces of chaos and helped to avert evil from the sanctuary.

The pointed beards and mustaches of the fallen men identify them as western Asiatics. As they tumble down beneath the horses' hooves, they overlap, but there is no impression of real depth. This is due in part to the lack of foreshortening and modeling. Also contributing to the sense of flatness is the fact that the paint was laid on in unshaded colors and that the relief is very shallow—the background was cut away scarcely a quarter of an inch. Everything is tangled up on the surface, which effectively expresses the confusion, terror, and fear of being trapped in hand-to-hand combat. Equally effective are the diagonal repetitions of the heads, arms, legs, torsos, arrows, and the expressive hands and gaping mouths.

Notice that even in this active scene the artists adhered to the conventions of depicting the human body with the shoulders and eyes in front view and the arms, legs, and heads in profile. The colors have remained remarkably fresh because this block, which was part of a temple wall built probably during the reign of Thutmosis IV, was reused in building the foundations of a later temple. Large-scale depictions of battles are especially well known from the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties. This striking example of Egyptian narrative art was recently recognized as one of the earliest such works extant.

*Notice:* action, colors, material

*Discuss:* how action is expressed, visual depth, symbolism, overlapping (see page 44)

*Compare:* slides 25 and 39



## 19. Sakhmet

Dynasty 18, reign of Amenhotep III
(ca. 1390–1353 b.c.), ca. 1390–1353 B.C.
Granodiorite, h. 81 1/2 in.
Gift of Henry Walters, 1915
15.8.3

Perhaps because she is such a renowned hunter, ancient Egyptians associated the lioness with several goddesses who had violent sides to their natures. The most prominent of these was Sakhmet (SOCK-met), goddess of war, violent storms, and pestilence. Her name means "the powerful one."

This lifesize figure depicts Sakhmet seated on a throne. Her body is that of a young woman wearing anklets, bracelets, a collar necklace, and a formfitting dress. Because she was the daughter of the sun god, Sakhmet wears a sun disk on her headdress, in front of which rears the uraeus. In her right hand is an ankh, the symbol of life, held almost exclusively by gods. The potentially awkward transition from human body to animal head is skillfully covered by the long wig. The stylized lion's mane, an attribute of the male lion, was a symbol of power used regardless of gender.

Even the most violent Egyptian deities had a gentle side. The serenity, beauty, and majesty of these statues suggest that Sakhmet's awesome powers have been appeased and turned from devastation to protection. That is precisely the function of such figures. At least six hundred of them were commissioned by Amenhotep III to honor Sakhmet and were placed in the precincts of a temple to the great goddess Mut (rhymes with "hoot") at Karnak.

*Notice:* identifying features, costume, expression, pose, material

*Discuss:* symbolism, function

*Compare:* slides 15 and 16



## 20. Fragment of the head of a queen

Early Amarna Period, ca. 1350–1340 B.C.
Yellow jasper, h. 5 1/2 in.
Purchase, Edward S. Harkness Gift, 1926
26.7.1396

This fragment of a lifesize head is famous because of the extraordinary skill and patience it must have taken to create it. It is made of the semiprecious stone jasper, a form of quartz so hard that it could not be carved with the bronze tools of Egyptian sculptors. Instead, the sculptor chipped and pecked the jasper into the basic form using a stone hammer. Then the surface was abraded; that is, the sculptor rubbed it with pastes of fine quartz. As the piece neared completion, finer and finer pastes were used to create the subtle details and sheen of the surface.

Because of the rarity of the stone and following a trend of the period, only the flesh parts of the figure were of jasper. The rest of the figure was made of other materials, such as, perhaps, white alabaster for the garments and wood covered with colored stones and gold for the headdress. It is remarkable that this fragment of such a precious work of art was preserved at all, because jasper was much in demand for jewelry.

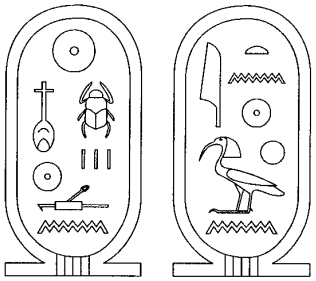
Given the value of the materials, this fragment must have come from a statue that represented a royal person: a queen, of course, not a king, since yellow-tan flesh tones signify the female in Egyptian art. Light reflecting from the polished surfaces emphasizes the modeling of the chin, the curve of the cheeks, and the flesh of the lips. Imagine what the rest of the face, undoubtedly as carefully modeled and polished, must have looked like. Then imagine the splendor of the entire figure.

*Notice:* condition, material

*Discuss:* how we know this fragment represents a queen, why this head is famous

*Compare:* slides 21–23





Cartouches of Akhenaten

## 21. Akhenaten sacrificing a duck

Dynasty 18, reign of Akhenaten (ca. 1349–1336 B.C.), ca. 1353–1336 B.C.
Limestone, h. 9 5/8 in.
Gift of Norbert Schimmel, 1985
1985.328.2

On this block from a temple relief, Akhenaten (ack-en-AH-ten), recognizable by his elongated features, holds a duck up toward Aten, the solar disk. Akhenaten believed that light was the only divine power in the universe and thus was the source and sustainer of all creation. The solar disk was the means through which this power came into the world. Akhenaten's god was not portrayed in human or animal form but through the symbol of the solar disk with rays ending in small human hands, one of which holds an ankh, symbol of life, toward the king's nose. The sun-disk symbol is a large-scale hieroglyph meaning "light."

With one hand Akhenaten holds the duck firmly by its wings and with the other he wrings its neck before offering it to his god. Although early depictions of Akhenaten often appear strangely exaggerated, his sculptors later in his reign attempted a more naturalistic style, emphasizing transitory motion and a sense of space and atmosphere. Akhenaten's hands here are grasping and straining to hold on to the struggling duck. Such a scene, capturing a moment in a sacrifice being made by a king, would never have been attempted in another period. Akhenaten's right hand, however, is twisted so that all five fingers can be seen, a pose that conforms to the Egyptian convention of presenting each part of the body as completely as possible.

The type of relief used here is called sunk relief. Instead of cutting the background away and leaving the figures raised above the surface of the stone (as in raised relief), the artist has cut the outlines of the figures into the surface. Sunk relief in general appears mostly on the outside of buildings, where the outlines are emphasized by shadows cast by Egypt's brilliant sunlight, but during the Amarna period almost all relief was executed in this technique.

*Notice:* activity, solar rays

*Discuss:* exaggerations, symbolism, pose of hands

*Compare:* slides 4, 10, and 25



## 22. Canopic jar with a lid in the shape of a royal woman's head

Thebes, Tomb 55, Valley of the Kings, Dynasty 18, late reign of Akhenaten (ca. 1349–1336 B.C.) or shortly after
Alabaster with glass and stone inlays; h. 20 1/2 in.
Jar: 07.226.1
Gift of Theodore M. Davis, 1907
Lid: 30.8.54
Theodore M. Davis Collection, Bequest of Theodore M. Davis, 1915

The head that forms the stopper of this canopic jar is an idealized portrait of a beautiful royal woman. Her richly patterned wig and the intricate details of her collar contrast with the smooth surfaces of her face and of the jar itself. Sensitive modeling of the features creates an impression of the delicate freshness of real skin, an effect here achieved by a master sculptor who took full advantage of the translucent quality of the alabaster. The triangular face with its aristocratically thin nose, small mouth, and almond-shaped eyes under highly arched brows seems to float above the shadow between the pointed ends of the wig. Symmetry and repetition of oval shapes are in harmony with an expression of serenity and regal bearing. As in many canopic jar heads, attention is drawn especially to the eyes, through which the deceased woman connects with the world of the living. Large black pupils of obsidian are set between lids inlaid with a light brown stone that lends softness to the gaze. The expressively pointed arches of the brows are emphasized by bright blue glass inlay.

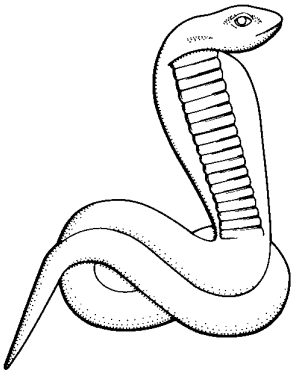
Canopic jars were used to store the internal organs (liver, lungs, stomach, and intestines) removed from the body during mummification. This canopic jar and the three others in the set, now in Cairo, were discovered in a tomb whose contents have puzzled archaeologists since it was first opened in 1907. The difficulties in understanding the finds from Tomb 55 stem from the great number of different names on the partly decayed objects and the presence of only one (male) mummy. Among the people named on various objects, such as a gilded shrine and coffin and the four canopic jars, were Queen Tiye (TEE-ah), the principal wife of Amenhotep III; Queen Kiya (KEE-ah), second wife of Tiye's son Akhenaten; Akhenaten himself; and the erased names of yet another pharaoh.

According to present understanding, Tomb 55 contained the remnants of several royal burials that originally were entombed at Amarna, were plundered and partly destroyed after Akhenaten's death, and then were transferred to Thebes and the Valley of the Kings during the reign of Akhenaten's successor, Tutankhamun. Before or during these proceedings the inscriptions on the canopic jars, which were originally dedicated to Kiya, were changed first to the names of Akhenaten and then were almost completely erased, possibly for use by a third person. This does not mean, however, that the beautiful head on the lid necessarily belonged to Kiya, for whom the jars evidently were made. Indeed, closer inspection seems to indicate that the four lids were not originally part of the jars. Taken on their own, the features of the face closely resemble those of Queen Tiye, Akhenaten's mother, who lived in her old age at Amarna and died and was buried there. The only difference from known portraits of the queen made at that time is that this is the head of a young woman, not an old one. Of course, this is how Egyptians preferred to look in images created for the afterlife.

*Notice:* expression, materials, and their effects

*Discuss:* what the object was made for, symmetry, repetition, contrast, modeling of the face, identity of the owner

*Compare:* slides 16, 20, 23, and 40



Cobra or Uraeus



## 23. Tutankhamun wearing the blue crown

Late Dynasty 18, reign of Tutankhamun, ca. 1336–1327 B.C.
Indurated limestone, h. 5 7/8 in.
Rogers Fund, 1950
50.6

This head is a fragment from a statue group that represented the god Amun, seated on a throne, and Tutankhamun (TOOT-ahnk-ah-mun) standing or kneeling in front of him, king and god facing in the same direction. The king's figure was considerably smaller than that of the god, indicating his subordinate status in the presence of the deity. All that remains of Amun is his right hand, which touches the back of the king's crown in a gesture that signifies Tutankhamun's investiture as king. During coronation rituals various types of crowns were put on the king's head. The type represented here—probably a leather helmet with metal disks sewn onto it—was generally painted blue, hence the Egyptologist's term "blue crown." The ancient name was *khepresh*.

The statue group this fragment comes from must have been commissioned when Egypt returned to the worship of the traditional gods after the death of Akhenaten. Tutankhamun, whose name during the Amarna era had been Tutankhaten—the living *(ankh)* image *(tut)* of Aten—must have been educated in the sole worship of the Aten (sun disk, light), but he headed the return to orthodoxy. Since representations of deities had been widely destroyed during the Amarna period, it became necessary to dedicate a host of new deity statues in the temples of Egypt when the country returned to its old gods. The extremely hard "indurated" limestone was among the favorite materials for such statues.

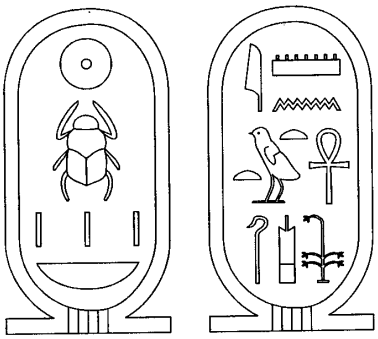
Statue groups showing a king together with gods had been created since the Old Kingdom (visitors to the Museum can also see the group of King Sahure, acc. no. 18.2.4), and formal groups relating to the pharaoh's coronation were dedicated at Karnak by Queen Hatshepsut and other kings of the Eighteenth Dynasty. The Metropolitan's head of Tutankhamun with the hand of Amun is special because of the intimacy with which the subject is treated. The face of

the king expresses a touching youthful earnestness, and the hand of the god is raised toward his crown with gentle care. Images as charged with sentiment as this were possible only under the influence of the art of the Amarna period.

*Notice:* crown, partial elements

*Discuss:* subject, meaning, function

*Compare:* slides 21 and 26



Cartouches of Tutankhamun



## 24. Haremhab as a scribe

Late Dynasty 18, reign of Tutankhamun or Aya,
ca. 1336–1323 B.C.
Granodiorite, h. 46 in.
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. V. Everit Macy, 1923
23.10.1

Haremhab was a royal scribe and generalissimo of the army under King Tutankhamun. He continued to serve during the reign of Aya, and then became king himself. This statue was made before he ascended the throne. That Haremhab chose to be represented as a scribe indicates the importance of literacy in Egypt; it also puts Haremhab in an age-old tradition of depicting a great official as a "wise man," that is, a scribe.

The great man sits slightly hunched over, and his eyes look downward, although not as far down as the papyrus scroll on which he is composing a hymn to the god Thoth, patron of scribes. The ink palette is on Haremhab's left thigh, and his right hand—now missing—once held the brush. The hieroglyphs on the scroll face the writer, and one can see how Egyptians unrolled a papyrus with the left hand while reading and writing. As a badge of office Haremhab has a strap slung over his left shoulder from which hang two miniature writing kits, one on the chest, the other on the back of the shoulder. To proclaim loyalty to the newly reinstalled traditional religion, Haremhab has a figure of the god Amun incised on his forearm, perhaps indicating a tattoo.

The scribe wears a long tunic of fine linen that reveals rolls of fat below his chest, which testify to maturity and the high status of the official. Pleats have been carefully pressed into the edges of the shirt that cover the arms like sleeves. Haremhab has wrapped a long, wide pleated sash around the lower part of his body. The sash has been tied at the waist and the long ends have been looped back to tuck under the tie. The shawl also has been carefully pleated. The figure's buttocks, thighs, and knees are covered with the linear pleat pattern, which contrasts with the smooth, round forms of the upper torso, arms, and the lower portion of the legs. A similar contrast is achieved between the delicately modeled facial features and the richly patterned wig.

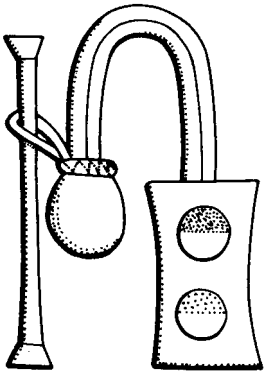
The triangular outline of the figure is opened up at the arms and elbows, and the statue's overall symmetry is broken by the one-sided diagonal of the lower right leg. By such means the sculptor managed to imbue a basically quiescent pose with tension and vitality. Similar results were obtained in the head and face by contrasting the youthfully rounded facial features and heavy-lidded eyes of a thinker with an angular, almost harshly cut jaw and chin. Despite its elegance and beauty, this is undoubtedly the image of a man of action to be reckoned with.

The horseshoe-shaped base forms an integral part of the whole composition, elevating the figure and at the same time contrasting its rich detail with the base's simple outline and smooth surface. The base is inscribed with additional religious texts: prayers to Thoth, Sakhmet, Ptah Sokar, and Osiris. The latter two gods are connected with death and rebirth, and it has been suggested that the statue was originally created for Haremhab's civilian tomb at Saqqara. However, a temple may also well have been the original location for this scribe statue of a great Egyptian.

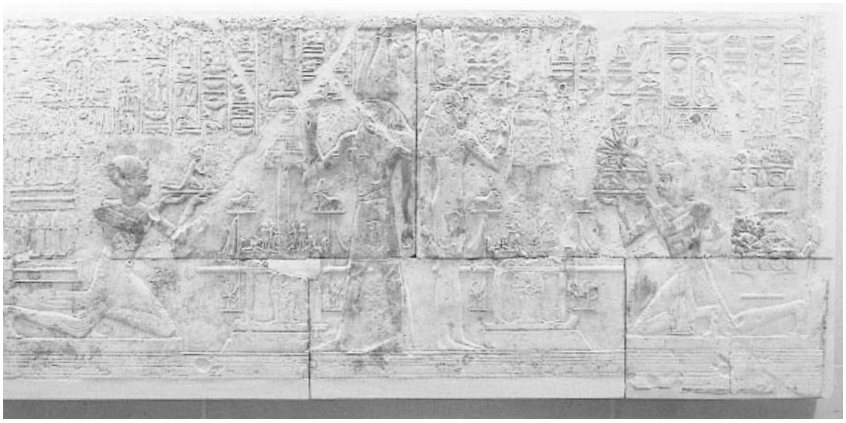
*Notice:* what the figure is doing, expression, costume, surface patterns, shapes, and contrasts

*Discuss:* identity, significance of the fleshy folds, naturalism and idealization

*Compare:* slides 15, 23, 31, and 38



Hieroglyph Meaning Scribe



## 25. West wall from a chapel built by Sety I for his father, Ramesses I

Abydos, Dynasty 19, reign of Sety I, ca. 1294–1279 B.C.
Limestone, l. 11 ft. 3 in.
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1911
11.155.3b

Osiris (oh-SIGH-ris) was the Egyptian god of the afterlife and rebirth. He ruled the netherworld, and his son, Horus, ruled the world of the living. Every reigning pharaoh was identified with Horus and was thought to become one with Osiris after death. At Abydos (ah-BYE-dos or AH-bee-dos), the place most sacred to Osiris, Egyptian kings built temples and funerary chapels so they would be identified with him. They believed that through carved images of themselves their spirits would be able to participate in the annual celebration of the myth of Osiris, during which Osiris was actually reborn, and by extension, they would be reborn as well. Whenever possible, nonroyal persons also attempted to participate by erecting chapels and stelae at Abydos (slide 33).

Originally this limestone relief was on the back wall inside a small chapel built by Sety I for his father, Ramesses I. In inscriptions on the chapel walls Sety declared, "I am the one who makes his name live" and "I will make him a place where his *ka* [spirit] can alight, drawn in outline and carved with the chisel."

The scene is divided down the center. On the right Ramesses kneels and presents an offering of food and flowers to a cult symbol of Osiris that resembles a head covered with a cloth or wig and surmounted by two tall ostrich plumes. The symbol is supported by a shaft set into a stand equipped with sledge runners and carrying poles. Encircling the shaft are small figures of deities and the king. Actual cult symbols in the time of Sety and Ramesses were probably made of rich materials. Behind the Osiris symbol is the figure of Isis (EYE-sis), wife of Osiris. She holds an ankh in one hand and raises the other in a gesture of protection.

The poses and arrangement of the figures on the left side of the scene are nearly identical to those on the right. Sety kneels and presents a small kneeling statue of himself offering a jar of myrrh to a cult symbol identical to

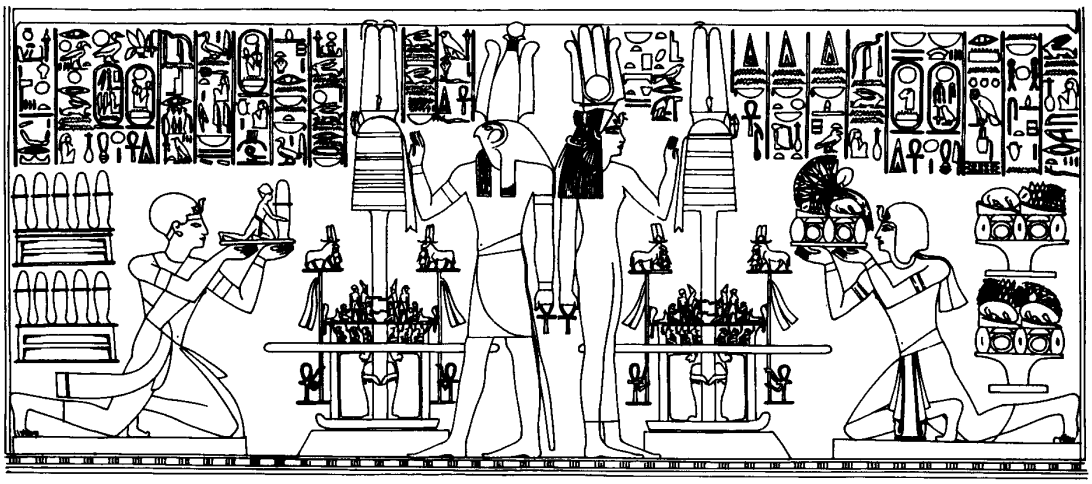
the one on the right. Behind the symbol stands a falcon-headed figure of Horus, son of Isis and Osiris. He holds an ankh and raises the other hand protectively. The sense of balance is reinforced by the triangular composition.

Reliefs from the two side walls of the chapel are displayed with the central one in the Museum. One shows Ramesses, his face exhibiting signs of old age, receiving offerings of food and drink. In the other, he and his family make offerings to Osiris, Isis, and Hathor.

*Notice:* what is happening, poses, gestures, hieroglyphs, relief

*Discuss:* meaning, function, how the figures are identified

*Compare:* slides 36 and 39, poster A



Drawing of the chapel's west wall.



## 26. Detail of Sety I

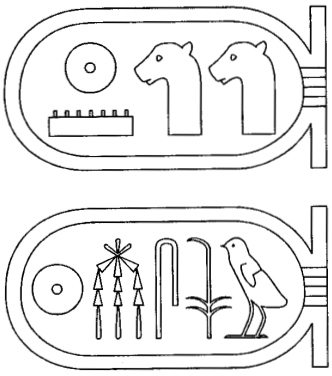
This close-up of the relief in slide 25 shows Sety offering Osiris a small statue of himself that is in turn offering a large jar of myrrh. The small figure is in a kneeling pose and wears one of the exclusively royal headdresses, the blue crown (see slide 23). Faint traces of paint can be seen around the pupil of Sety's eye.

This detail also shows the repairs Museum conservators made, using materials of a slightly different color and smoother texture so that what is original and what is modern can be clearly distinguished. Prolonged exposure to dampness during Nile floods damaged the limestone. The action of salts in the stone, brought on by the continual atmospheric changes, caused the surface to peel and crumble. The Museum conservation department has stabilized this deterioration by applying moist poultices to the relief to extract as much salt as possible from the stone as well as by establishing a constant atmosphere in the display case.

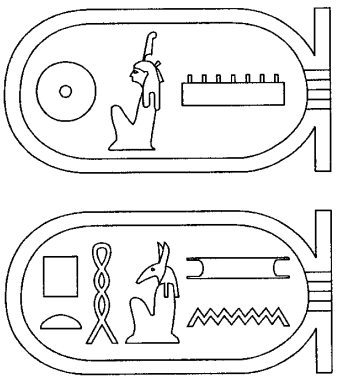
*Notice:* headdress, poses, costume

*Discuss:* how the sculptor suggested three-dimensional forms, why repairs are made in colors different from the original material

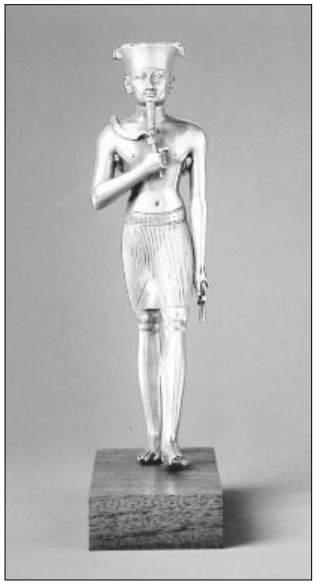
*Compare:* slide 21



Cartouches of Ramesses I



Cartouches of Sety I



## 27. Statuette of Amun

Dynasty 22, ca. 945–715 B.C.
Gold, h. 6 7/8 in.
Purchase, Edward S. Harkness Gift, 1926
26.7.1412

The god Amun ("the hidden one") first became important at the beginning of the Middle Kingdom (witness the name "Amenemhat"—"Amun is at the forefront"—of the first king of Dynasty 12). From the New Kingdom on, Amun was arguably the most important deity, both as a god of the state ("Amun, lord of the thrones of the Two Lands") and as a deity to whom common people turned in adversity. As a creator god Amun is most often identified as Amun-Re (in the typical Egyptian blending of deities, combined with the main solar deity, Re). His main sanctuary was the immense temple complex of Karnak (modern-day Luxor).

In this small figure Amun stands in the traditional pose with the left leg forward. He is identified by his characteristic flat-topped crown, which originally supported two tall gold feathers, now missing. He wears the gods' braided beard with a curled tip and carries an ankh emblem in his left hand and a scimitar across his chest. On pylons and temple walls of the New Kingdom Amun-Re is often depicted presenting a scimitar to the king, thus conferring on him military victory.

This statuette, cast in solid gold, is an extremely rare example of the statuary made of precious materials that filled the sanctuaries of temples according to ancient descriptions. The figure could have been mounted on top of a ceremonial scepter or standard. If traces on the back are rightly interpreted, it was fitted with a loop and could even have formed part of an elaborate necklace. For the Egyptians the color of gold and the sheen of its surface were associated with the sun, and the skin of gods was supposed to be made of that precious metal.

When this statuette first became known it was thought to have been made in the Eighteenth Dynasty. Soon, however, Egyptologists understood that the soft modeling of the torso, the narrow waist, and other features are typical of the

art of the Third Intermediate Period. This era marks the political decline of centralized power in Egypt, but artistically it is not at all a time of degeneration (see also Poster Description, page 61). On the contrary, especially works in metal (gold, silver, and above all bronze) were of the best quality, and the Museum's statuette of Amun testifies to the excellence typical of the period.

*Notice:* material, pose, things worn and held, symmetry

*Discuss:* identifying features, proportions, surface contrasts

*Compare:* slides 10, 28, 29, poster



Making an Offering



## 28. Statuette of the god Anubis

Ptolemaic Period, 304–30 B.C.
Wood with gesso and paint, h. 16 1/2 in.
Gift of Mrs. Myron C. Taylor, 1938
38.5

Anubis was the god of embalming and the protector of mummies in the potentially dangerous transition between death and rebirth in the afterlife. He was often portrayed as a human with the head of a jackal and sometimes entirely as a jackal. In ancient times the habitat of jackals included the places where the Egyptians buried their dead. Probably for this reason the Egyptians came to see in Anubis a guardian of the dead in their burial grounds.

This painted wooden figure of Anubis, part of a burial, raises his hands to perform purification and transfiguration rites over a mummy. During the burial rituals these rites were actually performed by priests wearing jackal masks to impersonate Anubis. The figure is shown in the typical striding stance of Egyptian sculpture. He wears the feather costume of the gods, depicted in small red-and-blue patterns, and stands upon a base decorated with designs symbolizing the rectangular paneling on facades of tombs and palaces. The wood is in remarkably good condition and all the colors are original.

*Notice:* pattern, material, animal features, stance

*Discuss:* gesture, identity of figure, symbolism, condition of the materials

*Compare:* slides 10 and 38, poster



## 29. Cat

Ptolemaic Period, 304–31 B.C.
Bronze, h. 11 in.
Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1956
56.16.1

When fastened together along an almost invisible seam, the two cast halves of this figure became the container for a mummified cat. The cat was the sacred animal of the goddess Bastet. In rituals performed in her honor, mummified cats were buried within her temple precincts.

Clearly this is not an ordinary cat. Its pierced right ear once held a gold ring, now lost, and suspended from its incised necklace is a *wedjat* eye pendant (see page 50). An impression of majesty is created by the cat's erect and dignified pose and the alert expression of the eyes. The sleek muscles and long graceful legs convey a sense of controlled power.

For the Egyptians the goddesses Bastet and Sakhmet (slide 19) were two aspects of divine power. Sakhmet, the lioness, represented dangerous, potentially destructive forces, whereas Bastet, the feline of the house, incorporated the benevolent aspects of a deity that could be pacified by rituals.

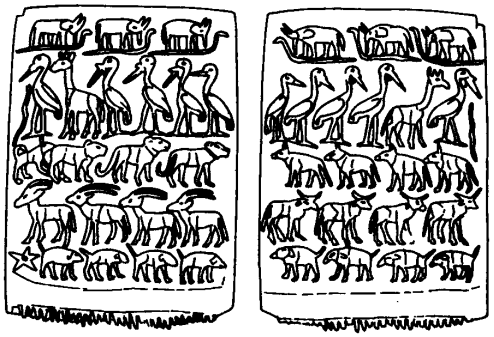
Cats were first domesticated by the Egyptians in the Middle Kingdom for their mouse-hunting abilities. By New Kingdom times they had also become household companions. In tomb scenes they frequently appear seated beneath the chairs of their owners or on sporting boats in the Nile marshes, where they flush out birds for their masters.

*Notice:* expression, pose, material

*Discuss:* symbolism, function, sense of majesty

*Compare:* slides 19, 34, and 36





Drawing of both sides of the comb.

## 30. Comb

Predynastic Period, ca. 3200 B.C.
Ivory, h. 2 1/4 in.
Theodore M. Davis Collection,
Bequest of Theodore M. Davis, 1915
30.8.224

This comb may have been part of the funeral equipment of someone who lived about 5,200 years ago. Parts of the comb's teeth, now missing, can be seen along the bottom edge. The detailed decoration suggests that the comb belonged to an elite person and was more a ceremonial object than just an instrument to arrange the hair. On both sides of the ivory handle there are profile figures of animals in horizontal rows, a spatial organization familiar from all later Egyptian art.

On the side pictured in the slide, elephants appear to be walking on top of giant snakes. In the second row a stork with a snake under its beak leads a giraffe followed by three more storks, and a heron or crane. A line of dogs or jackals moves across the center row. In the fourth row are cattle or wild bulls, and in the bottom row another line of dogs or perhaps pigs.

Notice how the animals change direction in each row, creating the impression that they are moving in a long parade that twists back and forth. This arrangement of figures is not, as a rule, found in later Egyptian art. The creatures are all in profile, however, which is the typical point of view for depicting animals in dynastic Egyptian art. Elephants treading on snakes suggest that this part of the scene was symbolic. The mythologies of many African peoples associate elephants and serpents with the creation of the universe. The uppermost row of this comb may symbolize a creative deity to whom the rest of the animals owe their existence.

*Notice:* types of animals, material, arrangement, point of view

*Discuss:* function, possible interpretations

*Compare:* slides 5, 34, 35, and 38



## 31. Nikare and his family

Saqqara, Dynasty 5, ca. 2465–2323 B.C.
Painted limestone, h. 22 1/2 in.
Rogers Fund, 1952
52.19

The Old Kingdom granary official Nikare (nye-kah-ray) commissioned this statue of himself, his wife, and his young daughter for his mastaba at Saqqara (slide 1). Scale and position indicate importance. Nikare, by far the largest figure, sits in the center on a thronelike seat. His small wife sits by his legs on the ground; her back is attached to the stone block upon which her husband sits. The body of their little daughter, recessed even further, is carved in high relief against her father's seat, except for her head, which is sculpted fully in the round. At the back of her head we see her long braided hair, a fashion at the time for young women. She is nude and touches her left breast with her right hand. Both women's pubic areas are emphasized, an indication, perhaps, that their presence will help Nikare to attain rebirth after death.

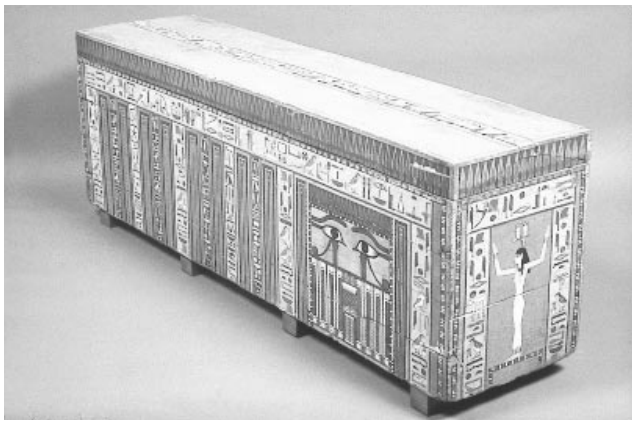
The figures of the women fit comfortably into the rectangular outline of the whole composition, and the composure of the group is reinforced by the squared-off shape of Nikare's shoulders and his frontal pose. The mass of the figures creates an impression of monumentality even though the statue is less than two feet high.

Although the anatomical details are based upon those of real bodies, they have been simplified and abstracted. The faces of the figures are nearly identical, suggesting that they were not meant to be portraits but rather idealized representations. Nikare and his wife are shown in the prime of life, the ideal age for eternity. Traces of the original paint remain. Nikare's flesh was reddish brown, the conventional skin color for males, and the wigs bear traces of black. Egyptians of status wore wigs, presumably on formal occasions. Curls of the wife's own hair can be seen on her forehead just beneath the wig.

*Notice:* the various figures, scale, poses4, frontality, sense of the block, material, traces of paint

*Discuss:* family dynamics, reasons for the idealization, function

*Compare:* slides 33, 36, and 37

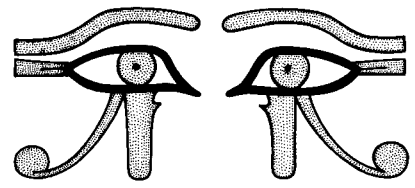


## 32. Coffin of a Middle Kingdom official

Asyūt, tomb of Khnumnakht, Dynasty 12, 1900–1800 B.C.
Painted wood, l. 82 in.
Rogers Fund, 1915
15.2.3

The most noticeable features on this painted wooden coffin of the official Khnumnakht (kh-noom-nockt) are the goddess at the head (identified by the inscriptions as either Isis or Neith, two of the four goddesses who protected the mummy), her hands raised in a gesture of protection, and the eye panel on the long side to the left. Eyes were powerful symbols of protection, guaranteeing that the deceased's body would remain undisturbed. Eyes painted on coffins had further significance. Coffins were always placed in the tomb with the eye side facing east. Inside the coffin the mummy, lying on its side, could look through the painted eyes at the rising sun, symbol of rebirth. Below the eyes is an elaborate version of the so-called false door, through which the spirit could come and go, spending the night in the mummy but leaving at dawn to live again in the world.

The colorful vertical patterns arranged symmetrically on each side of the door are derived from the reed matting used in very early Egyptian architecture. Over the eye panel and along the upper edge of the coffin is a pattern called *kheker* frieze, derived from the open knotted fringes of hanging rugs.The hieroglyphic inscriptions contain spells and prayers for Khnumnakht's eternal protection and sustenance and identify the coffin as his burial place.



Horus Eyes: painted on coffin panels for the deceased to look through

| | |
|---|---|
| *Notice:* | shape of coffin, goddess, hieroglyphs, material, colors |
| *Discuss:* | symbolism, gesture, relation of writing to art, why wood and paint have survived |
| *Compare:* | slides 3 and 38, poster |



## 33. Stela of a Middle Kingdom official

Abydos, Dynasty 12, ca. 1955 B.C.
Painted limestone, 41 x 19 5/8 in.
Gift of Edward S. Harkness, 1912
12.184

This rectangular stone slab, called a stela, honors an official named Mentuwoser (men-too-WAHS-er). Clasping a folded piece of linen in his left hand, he sits at his funeral banquet in a scene that ensures he will always receive food offerings and that his family will honor and remember him forever. To the right of Mentuwoser his son summons his spirit. His daughter holds a lotus and his father offers a covered dish of food and a jug that, given its shape, contained beer.

In order to show clearly each kind of food being offered, the carver arranged the images on top of the table vertically. The feast consists of round and conical loaves of bread, ribs and a hindquarter of beef, a squash, onions in a basket, a lotus blossom, and leeks.

The raised relief carving is very fine. The background was cut away only about one eighth of an inch. Within the firm clear outlines of the relief the sculptor subtly modeled the muscles of Mentuwoser's arms and legs, the shape of his jaw and cheeks, and the forms of the chair legs and the calf's head.

The hieroglyphic inscriptions in sunk relief state that this stela was presented by the king Senwosret I, in the seventeenth year of his reign, to Mentuwoser in appreciation of his loyal services. Mentuwoser's deeds are described at length. He was steward, granary official, and overseer of all manner of domestic animals, including pigs. He shows himself as a good man by claiming to have looked after the poor and to have buried the dead. Look at the hieroglyphs at the right end of the top line. The vertical hieroglyph with a curved top is the sign for "year," the inverted U shape is the sign for "ten," and the seven vertical lines make the total seventeen. Senwosret's throne name, Kheper-Ka-Re, appears within a cartouche in the middle of the top line.

The stela was erected in the sacred temple precinct of Osiris. Mentuwoser hoped that, through his image and the prayers on the stela, he would enjoy rebirth and sustenance at the annual festivals honoring Osiris.

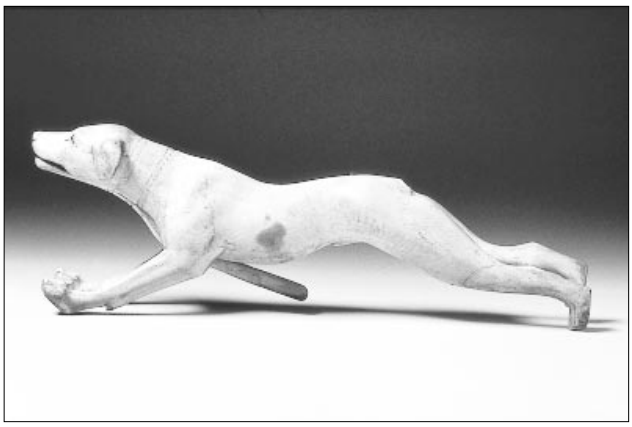
*Notice:* hieroglyphs, costume, material, scale, perspective

*Discuss:* what the figures are doing, scale, poses, relief techniques, gender colors, royal names, vertical perspective

*Compare:* slides 25, 31, and 36



Hieroglyphs for "Year"
and "Ten"



## 34. Ivory hunting dog

Late Dynasty 18, 1400–1350 B.C.
Ivory, tinted red inside mouth and black around eyes and on undersides of paws, l. 7 1/8 in.
Rogers Fund, 1940
40.2.1

Leaping forward toward its prey, this hunting dog has arched its front paws for the attack. The muscles of the front legs are tensed and those of the hind legs are stretched out in preparation for a push-off from the ground. The dog can actually be animated by working a lever under its belly that causes its jaws to open and close.

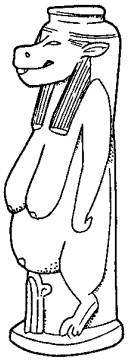
The carver has transformed his keen observations of dogs in action into an elegantly finished ivory figure, small enough to hold in one's hand. It is indeed a handheld object, since there is no indication of an ancient attachment to a base. The hound's tail (now missing) would have completed the graceful, curving outlines. It seems unlikely that such a finely made piece would have been a child's toy, since ivory was a luxury material. In scenes on temple walls and on works of royal art, the king was often shown with his hunting dog, who would leap to his assistance when the king was hunting a lion. The image is a symbol of the king's bravery and his vital role as the foe of chaos represented by the lion. Perhaps this hunting dog was placed in a royal tomb where it was meant to magically assist its owner in the afterlife.

*Notice:* action, material

*Discuss:* muscles, outlines, mechanical device, symbolism

*Compare:* slides 29 and 35





Taweret

## 35. Hippopotamus

Thebes, area of Deir el-Bahri, Dynasty 18,
ca. 1450 B.C.
Painting on limestone,
4 11/16 x 4 1/8 in.
Rogers Fund, 1923
23.3.6

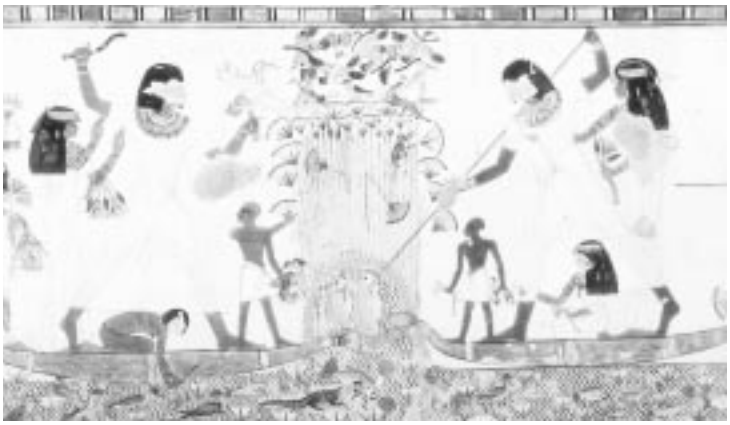
Herbert Winlock, the famous excavator for the Museum's Egyptian expeditions from 1906 to 1932, wrote, in the December 1923 *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin,* "One of the most charming bits that have ever come out of Egypt is on a flake of whitest limestone about the bigness of a man's hand. Some temple sculptor has been asked how he would draw a hippopotamus and, picking up this flake, he has portrayed a sedate beast of purplish brown hue with pink eyes and belly and an enormous jowl indicated with a few swift brush strokes of black." Because of the constant construction of temples and cut-rock tombs on the west bank of Thebes in the New Kingdom, flakes of limestone were strewn everywhere. Often they were used as sketch boards and practice "paper" by artists and scribes. Like all animals in two-dimensional Egyptian art, this hippo was drawn in profile.

In ancient times large numbers of hippos lived in the Nile and foraged in the wetlands along its banks. Egyptians feared them because of their huge mouths, teeth, and size and their aggressive natures when angered. Yet, because hippos are denizens of the fertile Nile mud, Egyptians also saw them as symbols of rebirth and rejuvenation. The birth-related aspect of the hippo's powers also appears in the complicated shape of the goddess Taweret, who protects women in childbirth. Her pregnant-looking body has a hippo's head and a crocodile's tail. She stands upright like a human and has lion's limbs for her arms and legs.

*Notice:* color, pose, point of view, materials

*Discuss:* function, symbolism

*Compare:* slides 28, 29, 30, and 36



## 36. Menna and his family fishing and fowling

Facsimile of a wall painting from the tomb of Menna, Thebes,
Dynasty 18, ca. 1400–1350 B.C., by Nina de Garis Davies, 1924
Tempera on paper, 74 x 39 1/2 in.
Rogers Fund, 1930
30.4.48

During the 1920s artists who were members of the Museum's expedition painted exact copies of tomb wall paintings, such as this facsimile of a painting from the tomb of a man named Menna. The copyist was Nina de Garis Davies, the most sensitive and gifted of all artists making facsimiles of this kind. Her ability to reproduce the very brush strokes of the ancient painter makes looking at the facsimile an experience almost equal to seeing the original. The value of all facsimiles made in the 1920s has increased because in many cases the condition of the actual paintings in the tombs has deteriorated considerably in the intervening years.

The Egyptians believed that the pleasures of life could be made permanent through scenes like this one of Menna hunting in the Nile marshes. In this painting Menna, the largest figure, is shown twice. He is spear fishing on the right and flinging throwing sticks at birds on the left. His wife, the second-largest figure, and his daughter and son are with him. By their gestures they assist him and express their affection. The son on the left is drawing attention with a pointed finger to the two little predators (a cat and an ichneumon) that are about to steal the birds' eggs. Pointed fingers were a magical gesture for averting evil in ancient Egypt, and the attack on the nest may well be a reminder of the vulnerability of life. Overall, scenes of life in the marshes, which were depicted in many New Kingdom tombs, also had a deeper meaning. The Nile marshes growing out of the fertile mud of the river and the abundant wildlife supported by that environment symbolized rejuvenation and eternal life.

Egyptian artists must have been familiar with the wildlife of the marshes because they carefully portrayed the birds, fish, crocodile, mouse, wildcat, and butterflies in this painting, paying keen attention to their appearances and habits. The crowd of animals, the bright colors, and the active poses of

Menna create a lively scene, as do the repeating patterns of the papyrus bush and the ripples in the water.

However, this scene is not what one would actually see from one point of view and at one moment in time. The figures are portrayed from both the front and the side. Furthermore, the water is seen from above, while the aquatic animals are in profile and are shown as if they were not in the water but on its surface. The relative sizes of the people and wildlife indicate their importance to Menna. It is amusing to note that the two fish Menna is about to spear are much larger than the nearby crocodile, and the water rises and forms a kind of hill, so it is obvious that Menna is about to make a magnificent catch.

The activities of Menna and his family, which must have taken place over a period of time, are combined in one ideal picture in which every object is very clear. The horizontal organization of the composition is balanced by the vertical thrust of the papyrus plants in the center. The figures in Menna's family are ordered within two horizontal rows, or registers, and face toward the center in nearly identical groups that fit within a triangular shape. The forms are clearly defined by thin, dark outlines and are set against a plain white background.

*Notice:* activities, poses, animal life, colors, patterns

*Discuss:* multiple points of view, arrangement and scale of figures, function, levels of meaning

*Compare:* slides 5, 17, and 25



## 37. Yuny and his wife, Renenutet

Asyūt, early Dynasty 19, late reign of
Sety I–early reign of Ramesses II,
ca. 1290–1270 B.C.
Limestone, h. 2 ft. 10 in.
Rogers Fund, 1915
15.2.1

These figures, more than half lifesize, represent Yuny seated next to his wife, Renenutet. Yuny, who lived in the city of Asyūt, was a chief royal scribe and holder of many other offices, including perhaps that of physician. Additional inscriptions on the base of the statue further elaborate Yuny's responsibilities. On the center fold of Yuny's pleated skirt is an inscription that reads "May everything that comes forth upon the offering table of [the god] . . . and all pure food that comes forth from the Great Enclosure [the temple complex at Heliopolis] be for the chief scribe, royal scribe of letters, Yuny, justified."

Renenutet affectionately places her right arm around her husband's shoulders. On the back of the statue she is described as a chantress, or temple-ritual singer, of Amun-Re. In her left hand she holds by its metal counterweight a heavy bead necklace called a *menat. Menat* necklaces were ritual implements that were held in the hands and shaken like sistrums, especially in the service of the goddess Hathor.

Appropriate to their high secular and religious positions, Yuny and Renenutet wear the elaborate wigs and fine linen attire fashionable in their time. Maintaining the pleats in Yuny's linen skirt and shirt must have required frequent pressing by servants. Renenutet is adorned with a lotus fillet and a broad collar necklace, which in reality would have been of faience and, perhaps, gold. The beads are in the shape of *nefer* symbols (see page 51), offering vases, and floral petals. Traces of black remain on the wigs. The couple sit together on a bench with elegantly carved lion-paw feet.

Note the pleasing contrast of intricately worked details with smooth surfaces. The almond shapes of the figures' eyes emphasized by incised outlines echo the ovals of their faces, and the curves of the figures' forms soften their



Drawing of the lower register on the back of the statue of Yuny and Renenutet, showing Renenutet offering refreshments to her parents.

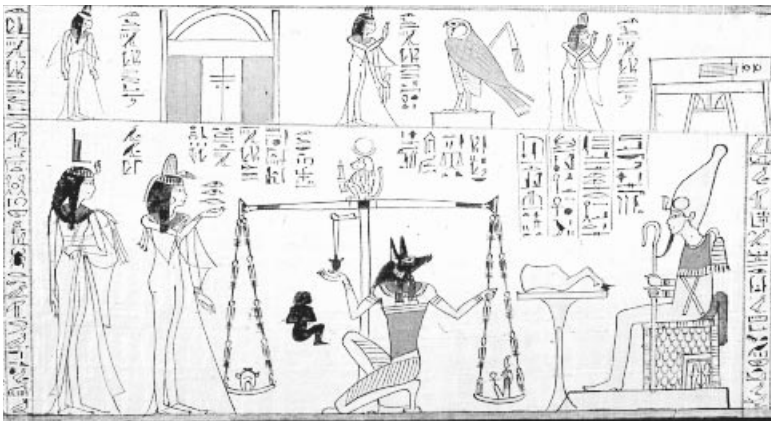
formal and frontal pose. Also noteworthy is the difference in the two faces: the eyes are almost identical, but Yuny's cheekbones are much more prominent, his nose, as can be seen, is fleshier, and the corners of his mouth are embedded deeper in skin folds. All this makes his face look more mature and individualized. The effect of the two similar but distinctly differentiated heads side by side but at different heights makes this image of a couple unforgettable.

On the back of the chair in both sunk and raised relief are two scenes illustrating the ancient Egyptian ideal of affection and remembrance among generations of a family. In the upper register Yuny and Renenutet receive offerings from their son; in the lower, Renenutet offers food and drink to her parents.

*Notice:* details, family relationships

*Discuss:* status symbols, the variety of carving, what is rounded, what is squared

*Compare:* slides 31 and 33



## 38. Section from a *Book of the Dead*

Thebes, Dynasty 21, ca. 1040–945 B.C.
Painted and inscribed papyrus, h. (of illustrated section) 13 3/4 in.
Rogers Fund, 1930
30.3.31

Archaeologists found this papyrus in the burial of Nany (NAH-nee), a woman in her seventies. She was a chantress (ritual singer) of the god Amun-Re and is referred to as "king's daughter" (probably meaning she was daughter of the high priest of Amun and titular king, Pinodjem I). As was customary during the Third Intermediate Period, her coffin and boxes of *shawabtis* (figures of substitute workers for the afterlife) were accompanied by a hollow wooden Osiris figure, which contained a papyrus scroll inscribed with a collection of texts that Egyptologists call the *Book of the Dead*. The ancient name was the *Book of Coming Forth by Day*. It is more than seventeen feet long when unrolled. The hieroglyphic inscriptions were written by a scribe, and the illustrations were drawn and painted by an artist.

The scene depicted here shows the climax of the journey to the afterlife. Nany is in the Hall of Judgment. Holding her mouth and eyes in her hand, she stands to the left of a large scale. Her heart is being weighed against Maat, the goddess of justice and truth, who is represented as a tiny figure wearing her symbol, a single large feather, in her headband. On the right, Osiris, god of the underworld and rebirth, presides over the scene. He is identified by his tall crown with a knob at the top, by his long curving beard, his crook, and by his body, which appears to be wrapped like a mummy except for his hands. At his back hangs a *menat* as counterweight for his collar. In front of him is an offering of a joint of beef. Jackal-headed Anubis, overseer of mummification, adjusts the scales, while a baboon—symbolizing Thoth, the god of wisdom and writing—sits on the balance beam and prepares to write down the result. Behind Nany stands the goddess Isis, both wife and sister of Osiris. She is identified by the hieroglyph above her head.

Nany has been questioned by the tribunal of forty-two gods about her behavior in life. She has had to answer negatively to every question asked in this examination, often called the negative confession. Examples of her denials

include: I have not done wrong. . . . I have not killed people. . . . I have not told lies. . . . I have not caused weeping. . . . I have not done what the gods detest. . . . I have not made anyone suffer. . . . I have not made false statements in the place of truth.

In this scene Nany has been found truthful and therefore worthy of entering the afterlife. Her heart is not heavier than the image of the goddess of Truth. Anubis says to Osiris, "Her heart is an accurate witness," and Osiris replies, "Give her her eyes and her mouth, since her heart is an accurate witness."

In the horizontal register above the judgment scene, Nany appears in three episodes: worshiping the divine palette with which all is written, praising a statue of Horus, and standing by her own tomb. Nany had a second papyrus roll with texts entitled *What Is in the Underworld (Amduat)* wrapped into her mummy in the area across her knees.

*Notice:* what seems to be happening, materials, relative sizes, registers

*Discuss:* meaning, function, concept of final judgment in many cultures

*Compare:* slides 17, 24, and 28, poster



Isis, Anubis, and Osiris, from Nany's *Book of the Dead*



## 39. Magical stela (detail)

Dynasty 30, reign of Nectanebo II,
360–343 B.C.
Graywacke, h. 32 7/8 in.
Fletcher Fund, 1950
50.85

This slide shows the top half of a stela that was carved with great skill in a very hard dark stone (possibly, by this time, using iron tools). On the part below the central figure panel, rows of hieroglyphs spell out thirteen magic spells to protect against poisonous bites and wounds and to cure the sicknesses caused by them. The stela was commissioned by the priest Esatum to be set up in the public part of a temple. The spells could be recited or, equally effective, the victim could drink water that had been poured over the magic words and images on the stela.

The hieroglyphic inscription around the base describes as a mythic precedent the magic cure that was worked upon the infant Horus by Thoth, the god of wisdom and writing. The story is part of the larger myth of Isis and Osiris, which relates how Osiris was killed by his brother Seth. Isis, the wife of Osiris, fled and hid in the delta marshes, where she gave birth to Horus. Grown up, Horus avenged his father by killing Seth and reclaiming the throne of Egypt. On the stela Isis speaks and recounts how, during the time she and Horus were still hiding in the marshes, she had found the child Horus sick and, in her despair, cried for help "to the Boat of Eternity" (the sun boat in which the god travels over the sky). "And the sun disk stopped opposite her and did not move from his place." Thoth is sent from the sun boat to help Isis and cures the child Horus by reciting a whole catalogue of spells. The spells always end with the phrase "and the protection of the afflicted as well," indicating that by using these spells, any type of affliction in human beings will be healed.

In this detail of the stela Horus emerges from the background in such high relief that he is posed as an actual three-dimensional statue, with his left leg striding forward and his head directly facing the viewer. He is portrayed in the conventional Egyptian form for "youth"; that is, he is nude and wearing his

hair in a side lock. The soft, rounded forms of the bodies of Horus and the other deities are typical for the style of the period.



Bes

To symbolize his magic powers, Horus holds snakes and scorpions as well as an antelope (by its horns) and a lion (by its tail) in his closed fists. His feet rest on two crocodiles. Above him is the head of Bes, the dwarf deity with leonine features who protected households but had become by this time a more general protective deity. Horus is flanked by three deities who stand upon coiled snakes. On the right is Thoth, identified by his ibis head, and on the left is Isis. Both protectively hold the walls of a curved reed hut, a primeval chapel, in which the Horus child stands together with a figure of Re-Harakhty, god of the rising sun, and two standards in the form of papyrus-and-lotus columns. The lotus standard supports the two feathers of Osiris's headdress.

The images incised into the stone at the top of the stela portray the perilous nighttime journey of the sun as it passes through the netherworld under the earth. Its rebirth each morning is shown at the uppermost point of the stela, where Thoth, four baboons, and the kneeling King Nectanebo II lift their arms in the gesture of adoration and prayer.

Nectanebo II was the last indigenous king of ancient Egypt. He struggled valiantly against the Persian empire only to be defeated in the end. After the lost battle, he fled to Upper Egypt, and nothing is known about his end. The Museum's impressive stone falcon figure is also a work commissioned by him.

*Notice* figures, hieroglyphs, relief carving, material

*Discuss:* meaning, function, medicine, arrangement of design

*Compare:* slides 25 and 38



## 40. Portrait of a boy

Roman Period, 2nd century A.D.
Encaustic on wood, h. 15 in.
Gift of Edward S. Harkness, 1918
18.9.2

The young teenage boy in this remarkably lifelike portrait looks calmly at the viewer, his head in three-quarter view. He is dressed in a white Roman tunic with a narrow purple *clavus* (a vertical stripe) over the right shoulder. A mantle of the same color as the tunic is draped over the left shoulder. The boy wears his dark brown hair short with short locks brushed to both sides of the forehead. The inscription in dark purple pigment below the neckline of the tunic is in Greek, which was the common language of the eastern Mediterranean at the time. Scholars do not completely agree on the translation of the inscription. The boy's name ("Eutyches, freedman of Kasanios") seems indisputable; then follows either "son of Herakleides, Evandros" or "Herakleides, son of Evandros." It is also unclear whether the "I signed" at the end of the inscription refers to the manumission (act of freeing a slave) that would have been witnessed by Herakleides/Evandros, or to the painter of the portrait. An artist's signature would be unique in mummy portraits.

Paintings of this type, often called Faiyum (fie-OOM) portraits (although by no means all of them come from the Faiyum oasis), are typical products of the multicultural, multiethnic society of Roman Egypt. Most of them are painted in the elaborate encaustic technique, using pigments mixed with hot or cold beeswax and other ingredients such as egg, resin, and linseed oil. This versatile medium allowed artists to create images that in many ways are akin to oil paintings in Western art. The boy's head, for instance, stands out with an impression of real depth from the light olive-colored background. His face is modeled with flowing strokes of the brush and a subtle blend of light and dark colors. Shadows on the left side of the face, neck, and garment and bright shiny spots on the forehead and below the right eye indicate a strong source of light on the boy's right. Most arresting are the eyes, dark brown with black pupils that reflect the light with bright spots. This manner of painting, which is

very different from the traditional Egyptian style but was well known in Greco-Roman Egypt, originated in Classical Greece in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.

If the manner of painting on Faiyum portrait panels is Greek, their use is entirely Egyptian. When a person died, the portrait panel, whose previous function is yet unexplained, was placed over the face of the mummy with parts of the outermost wrapping holding it in place. This implies Egyptian beliefs about the afterlife. Roman Egypt, in fact, after having been ruled for three hundred years by a Greek (Macedonian) dynasty and a century or more by Roman administrators, was an extremely diverse civilization. The population consisted of Roman citizens and citizens of Greek cities such as Alexandria (both of these groups being made up of peoples of many different ethnicities) and declared native Egyptians. All these people, according to the scholar R. S. Bagnall, may well have considered themselves "as Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans simultaneously." The subjects of the mummy portraits, at least, clearly were dressed and coiffed like Romans, and many of them bore Greek names or names that were Greek versions of Egyptian names. When they died, however, they and their families found consolation in the ancient Egyptian beliefs about the afterlife.

*Notice:* age of the sitter, costume, inscription

*Discuss:* use of light and shadow to create three-dimensional form, technique, style, function, cultural fusion

*Compare:* slides 16, 20, and 37, poster



# V. Glossary

| | |
|---|---|
| amulet | small token, for example a hieroglyphic symbol or figurine of a god, that is believed to provide magical protection or another kind of benefit to its wearer |
| Amun | god of Thebes, "the hidden one," shown in human form with a tall crown of feathers. Sacred animals are the ram and the goose |
| Amun-Re | from the Middle Kingdom onward this fusion of Amun and Re is the preeminent deity, combining in a single entity all the characteristics of the creator and sustainer of the world |
| ankh | hieroglyphic sign meaning "life" and "to live" |
| Anubis | god of embalming, protector of the deceased, guardian of the cemetery |
| Atef crown | resembles the crown of Upper Egypt with an ostrich plume on each side and horizontal ram's horns underneath; worn by Osiris, to symbolize his triumph over death, and by the king in certain rituals |
| Aten | solar disk: under Akhenaten worshiped as the medium through which the divine power of light comes into the world |
| Atum | "the undifferentiated one": according to myth, the primeval being and creator of the world; also god of the setting sun |
| *ba* | the spiritual part of a deceased person that has the ability to act and move about. The *ba* of a god can be translated as that god's efficacy. In art the *ba* of a deceased person appears as a human-headed bird. |
| bas relief | low relief in which the images are raised from the background, which has been cut away |
| Bastet | goddess of the city of Bubastis in the delta, depicted as a cat or as a human with a cat's head; often understood as the benign counterpart of Sakhmet |

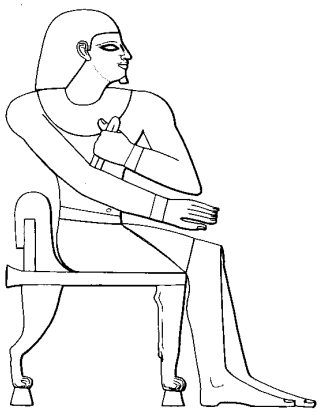
| | |
|---|---|
| Bes | protective dwarf deity with a monstrous face and a lion's ruff; a household god who averts evil, especially at times of childbirth, and is in charge of sexual life |
| blue crown | the *khepresh*, a helmet-shaped crown frequently worn by kings from the New Kingdom on, usually colored blue |
| canopic jars | funerary jars containing organs removed from the mummy; these were made in sets of four to contain the lungs, stomach, liver, and intestines |
| cartonnage | a material made of layers of gummed linen or papyrus and plaster; a medium for mummy masks and coffins |
| cartouche | oval frame (meant to indicate a tied rope) in which the birth and throne names of the king are written |
| crook and flail | from the early Old Kingdom onward, part of the king's paraphernalia also held by Osiris. Originally the crook probably derived from a shepherd's stick; as a hieroglyph it signified the word "ruler." The flail resembles a fly whisk. |
| cult symbol | symbol of a deity, often itself an object of veneration |
| cursive | a style of writing in which successive characters are joined and angles are rounded |
| demotic | a cursive form of hieroglyphic writing developed in the seventh century B.C., written from right to left |
| double crown | the crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt worn together |
| dynasty | a series of rulers descending within a family; following the Ptolemaic historian Manetho, ancient Egyptian history is divided into thirty dynasties |
| faience | a powdered quartz paste, which is modeled or molded and fired; it is either self-glazed or made with applied glaze |
| false door | a panel in the form of a niched doorway through which the deceased could receive offerings |
| gesso | a mixture of whiting and glue often used to prepare a surface for painting |
| Harakhty | "Horus of the horizon," the god of the rising sun, depicted as a falcon or a falcon-headed human crowned by a sun disk |

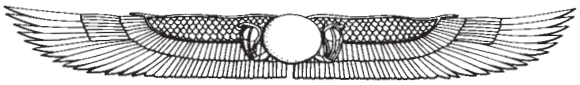
| | |
|---|---|
| Hathor | a goddess sometimes depicted as a cow or with cow's horns and ears; associated with joy, music, and love |
| Heh | god of millions of years, of eternity |
| hieratic | handwritten counterpart to the hieroglyphic script, developed in the Old Kingdom mainly for writing on papyrus; written from right to left |
| hieroglyph | a Greek word meaning "sacred symbol." In Egypt, one of some seven hundred signs used in writing (considerably more if one counts signs used exclusively in the Old Kingdom and the periods after the New Kingdom). "Hieroglyphs" refers to the signs themselves; "hieroglyphic script" is Egyptian writing. (Calling the signs "hieroglyphics" is incorrect.) |
| Horus | ancient sky god in the form of a falcon, embodiment of the divine powers of the living king; son of Osiris and Isis |
| ideogram | (sense sign) a hieroglyph signifying the actual object depicted or a closely connected notion |
| Isis | wife of Osiris, mother of Horus, the divine magician because of her extraordinary powers, divine mourner of the dead; her name is written with the hieroglyphic sign for "throne," which she wears on her headdress |
| *ka* | life force; the hieroglyphic sign is a pair of extended arms |
| *Maat* | right order and justice established by the gods, personified by the goddess Maat, who wears an ostrich feather on her head or is represented by the ostrich feather itself |
| magic rod | a squared or rectangular object carved with symbols, such as felines, crocodiles, protective *wedjat* eyes, and baboons tending lamps, that Egyptians may have believed helped the sun reappear each day from the chaos of night. These rods were placed in tombs to guarantee a similar rebirth to the deceased. |
| mastaba | a type of Egyptian tomb having a rectangular superstructure with exterior walls slightly slanting inward as they rise; contains chapels, chambers, and a shaft leading to an underground burial |
| mortuary temple | a temple erected and endowed by a king where he could receive offerings in perpetuity after his death |

| | |
|---|---|
| Mut | "mother": worshiped as the consort of Amun; shown as a vulture or as a woman wearing the double crown |
| myrrh | a fragrant aromatic plant gum used in making perfume, unguents, and incense |
| natron | a natural salt used in mummification |
| necropolis | from the Greek meaning "city of the dead," especially the large cemetery of an ancient city |
| Neith | "the terrifying one": protector of the king and one of four goddesses who guard the coffin and the canopic box |
| *nemes* | a royal headdress, probably of striped linen or perhaps leather, with lappets falling forward over each shoulder and with the fabric gathered and tied in back |
| Nephthys | sister of Isis, protector of coffins and canopic jars |
| Nut | the winged sky goddess; as a woman arching over the earth she is the personification of the vault of the heavens |
| Osiris | according to myth, Egypt's first king; created by the gods, Osiris suffered a violent death, was made whole again magically by Isis, and became the ruler of the dead |
| ostracon | a limestone or pottery flake used to sketch, practice writing, or make notes |
| papyrus | the writing surface of Egyptian scribes, made from the pith of papyrus stalks separated into strips that were flattened and placed side by side, slightly overlapping. On top of this layer, another layer of strips was placed at right angles to the first. The surface was then repeatedly pounded to make it smooth. The plant juices released in the pounding caused the strips to adhere to each other permanently without the aid of glue. In art, images of papyrus plants symbolized the world, which arose from the primeval waters at the time of creation. The plant was also the heraldic symbol of Lower Egypt. |
| Ptah Sokar | creator god and patron of craftsmen: shown as a human without any indication of limbs |

| | |
|---|---|
| Re | meaning simply "sun," the most important name of the sun god, who was later combined with many other gods; the creator and sustainer of the world, who travels in a bark through the sky by day and through the underworld by night |
| Re-Harakhty | falcon-headed god, fusion of Re and Harakhty |
| red crown | red headdress, cylindrical in shape with a high back extension, symbolizing the sovereignty of the king over Lower Egypt |
| Sakhmet | ambivalent goddess of war, disease, and chaos, who could also cause such calamities to cease and, in her role as the sun's destructive eye, could repel hostile powers threatening Egypt; usually shown with a lioness's head and a lion's mane |
| sarcophagus | a coffin made of stone |
| Selket | goddess—shown in human form with a scorpion on her head—who, with Isis, protected Horus during his childhood and was one of the four goddesses who guard the coffin and canopic box |
| *serdab* | an Arabic word for the statue chamber of a tomb |
| Seth | violent deity, murderer of his brother Osiris (who had been divinely installed to maintain order); shown in human form with the head of a strange doglike creature; associated with the desert, where the ordered world ends; nonetheless, Seth uses his powers to help protect the sun god during his nightly journey through the underworld |
| sistrum | a sacred rattle consisting either of a metal hoop with crossbars to which metal disks are attached or of a rectangular centerpiece in the shape of a small temple gate with two metal bands at each side |
| sledge | a platform on flat runners used to transport loads |
| sons of Horus | protectors of the internal organs removed during mummification. Human-headed Imsety protects the liver; baboon-headed Hapy, the lungs; jackal-headed Duamutef, the stomach; and hawk-headed Qebehsenuef, the intestines. |
| stela (pl. stelae) | an upright slab of stone carved and inscribed with religious or historical texts and representations |
| sunk relief | relief in which the forms are set back from the flat stone surface |

| | |
|---|---|
| Taweret | hippopotamus goddess of childbirth |
| Tefnut | goddess of moisture, who, with Shu, god of light and air, were the first divine couple created by Atum |
| temple precinct | the enclosed area around a temple |
| Thoth | god of writing, scribes, and the moon; depicted as an ibis-headed human or as a baboon |
| throne name | the designation "king of Upper and Lower Egypt"; one of the two most important names of the king, the other being his birth name, which identified him as the "son of Re" |
| underworld | the dangerous world through which a boat carrying the sun god and his companions, including the deceased, must travel every night |
| uraeus | the mythical fire-spitting cobra, a protector of kings and gods, worn on the front of the headdress, depicted rearing up with dilated hood |
| wadi | valley or stream bed that is dry except perhaps in the rainy season |
| *wedjat* eye | an eye with stylized falcon markings, meaning "that which is made whole," the symbol of the left eye of Horus, torn out by Seth in their battle over who should rule Egypt. The eye, which was restored by the god Thoth, is a symbol of revitalization after death. Each part of the Horus eye represented a mathematical fraction in writing. Altogether the fractions add up to one, or the whole. |
| white crown | tall tapering crown with a bulbous terminus, the crown of Upper Egypt |





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*These items are available for sale at the Museum's shops. Please call 1-800-468-7386 to place an order.

# SUGGESTED WEB SITES WITH INFORMATION ABOUT EGYPTIAN ART

The Cleveland Museum of Art
http://www.clemusart.com/archive/pharaoh/rosetta/roseff.html

Guardian's Egypt
http://www.guardians.net/Egypt

The Metropolitan Museum of Art
http://www.metmuseum.org
Portions of the teacher resources about Egypt will soon be available online.

Michael C. Carlos Museum/Memorial Art Gallery
http://www.cc.emory.edu/CARLOS/ODYSSEY
"Odyssey Online" includes valuable information about many ancient peoples, including the Near East, Egypt, Greece, and Rome.

The Minneapolis Institute of the Arts
http://www.artsMIA.org
Online teacher curriculum on world mythology, including Egypt.

Nova
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/pyramid
Based on the *Nova* episode about building the pyramids, contains a wealth of visuals, including a tour inside a pyramid, and information.

The Oriental Institute/University of Chicago
http://www-oi.uchicago.edu
Virtual visit to a scholarly museum of ancient art including the Near East, Egypt, and Mesopotamia.

Reeder's Egypt Page
http://www.egyptology.com/reeder

The Theban Mapping Project, headed by Dr. Kent Weeks
http://www.KV5.com
Visuals and detailed information about the sites at Luxor.

The University of Chicago
http://www.oi.uchicago.edu/OI/PROJ/GIZ/Giza.html
Information about the pyramids and the Great Sphinx and the ongoing project to map the Old Kingdom necropolis at Giza.

# MUSEUMS WITH COLLECTIONS OF EGYPTIAN ART IN NORTH AMERICA

Listed Alphabetically by State or Province

**California**

Berkeley: The Phoebe Apperson Hearst Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology
Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art
San Diego: San Diego Museum of Man
San Francisco: M. H. De Young Memorial Museum of the Fine Arts Museums
San Jose: Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum

**Colorado**

Denver: The Museum of Natural History

**Connecticut**

New Haven: Peabody Museum of Natural History
New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery

**District of Columbia (Washington)**

The Natural History Museum

**Illinois**

Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History
Chicago: The Oriental Institute Museum, University of Chicago

**Maryland**

Baltimore: Walters Art Gallery

**Massachusetts**

Boston: Museum of Fine Arts
Worcester: Worcester Art Museum

**Michigan**

Ann Arbor: Kelsey Museum of Ancient and Medieval Archaeology
Detroit: The Detroit Institute of Art

**Minnesota**

Minneapolis: The Minneapolis Institute of Arts

**Missouri**

Kansas City: The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art
St. Louis: The St. Louis Art Museum

**New Jersey**

Newark: The Newark Museum
Princeton: The Art Museum, Princeton University

**New York**

New York (Brooklyn): The Brooklyn Museum

New York (Manhattan): The Metropolitan Museum of Art

**North Carolina**

Raleigh: North Carolina Museum of Art

**Ohio**

Cincinnati: Cincinnati Art Museum

Cleveland: The Cleveland Museum of Art

Toledo: The Toledo Museum of Art

**Ontario, Canada**

Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum

**Pennsylvania**

Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

Pittsburgh: The Carnegie Museum of Natural History

**Québec, Canada**

Montreal: Redpath Museum, McGill University

**Rhode Island**

Providence: Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art

**Tennessee**

Memphis: Institute of Egyptian Art and Archaeology

**Texas**

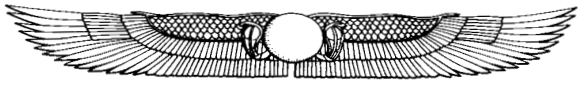
San Antonio: San Antonio Museum of Art

**Virginia**

Richmond: Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

**Washington**

Seattle: Seattle Art Museum



# VII. Activities

These activities include discussion topics for the whole class and art and writing projects for individuals or groups of students. There are also specific activities and discussion topics based upon looking at the poster.

Look through these activities and use your imagination! They have been designed to suit a wide range of ages, abilities, and interests. Given the characteristics of your class and the time you have available, select the activities that are most appropriate. A number of the activities also appear as part of the lesson plans beginning on page 147.

## *Classroom Activities*

### • Costume and Adornment

Discuss the ornaments worn by figures in Egyptian art. Where on the body were they worn? What are these adornments, and do they have meaning? (Floral patterns, animal forms, and colors function as ornaments but may also have religious and amuletic meaning as well as being symbols of wealth, power, and position.)

Ask the students to draw or design in several appropriate materials an amulet they would like to wear that symbolizes protection, power, good fortune, or fame. Have the other students guess what the amulet symbolizes. You may want to set up a "museum," complete with labels, to display these creations.

### • You as an Egyptian

Have the students draw a self-portrait in the Egyptian style. Remind them to show:

the head, hips, arms, legs, and feet in profile

the eye, shoulders, and chest from the front

men posed with the left foot forward, women with their feet together

a wig, jewelry, costume, and something magical and protective

Put on an Egyptian fashion show, using what the students have learned about Egyptian poses and costumes.

## • A Broad Collar

Have the students make their own Egyptian broad-collar necklaces (see poster of Henettawy and slide 13). Cut large half-circles out of oaktag or construction paper and ask the students to create their own repeating designs and use their favorite colors. This could be a collage activity. When completed, the collars can be strung and worn.

## • Body Language

Discuss the different kinds of expressions and postures we use to express certain feelings and reactions. How do these actions reveal moods?

Play charades. Give each student a folded card upon which is written an emotion or situation such as protecting, commanding, praising, worshiping, offering, meditating, winning, losing, and so on.

Discuss how Egyptian artists used gestures and poses to explain what a figure was doing.

## • Favorites Forever

Ask the students to imagine that they believe in the same kind of afterlife that the Egyptians did. Have them make a list of their favorite pastimes and things that they would like to have with them forever. Suggest that they write a story about the things on their list and/or draw a picture of their ideas. The class could make a time capsule into which the students would put their lists and pictures and even small objects. They could also write letters to people of the future who might be confused about what some of the things were.

## • Life after Death

Discuss with your class the following topics or assign them to a group of students who will report to the class using the poster to illustrate their research.

Egyptian afterlife beliefs

how Egyptian burial practices changed from the Old Kingdom to late Dynastic times (this is a way of reminding students that although much about Egyptian art and society remained fairly consistent for three thousand years, change did occur).

## • On the Wall

Ask the whole class or smaller groups to work together on a mural-size drawing for the classroom, pretending it is a modern tomb wall. Discuss what favorite activities the students would like to do forever and what special people, belongings, and food they would like to have with them always. They can use the favorites they have listed and written about in the activity given above.

When the project is finished, have a class discussion about the ways the class wall painting differs from ancient Egyptian painting, not only in subject matter but also in style.

## • Wrap-ups

Ask the students to make a clay model in the shape of a mummy and wrap it with strips of old sheeting. They can include small images of jewelry and other protective symbols they have created, and they could design a mask for the mummy's surface.

## • Eyewitness News

Ask your students to write eyewitness accounts of the Hall of Judgment scene in slide 38. What is Nany thinking? What are Osiris and Anubis going to say? Will Isis get involved? The students may write their accounts as if they are observers of the scene, or they may write from the point of view of one of the characters. As a dramatic activity, students could take the parts of the figures, write dialogue, and act out what is happening. Some groups might want to imagine what happened following the illustrated scene and describe the action when Nany gave her answers before the forty-two judges. Use typical Egyptian gestures and poses to help explain each character's actions. If you can, record or photograph the activity so you have a class record.

This eyewitness account of events in the Hall of Judgment could be a lead story in an Egyptian newspaper created by groups of students writing about other important events, such as medical news (the magic cure of Horus in slide 39); international news (the battle scene in slide 18); royal activities (Akhenaten sacrificing in slide 21, Tutankhamun being sanctioned in slide 23, and Sety honoring his father in slide 25); literary news (Haremhab in slide 24); sports (the champion hunting dog in slide 34 and the fishing and fowling activities in slide 36); travel (a visit to the Temple of Dendur, slide 4, the view of the Nile in slide 5, and the river boat in slide 8); family activities (Nikare and his family in slide 31 and Menna and his family in slide 36); fashion (Meketre's offering bearer in slide 10, Wah's jewelry in slide 13, Haremhab in slide 24, and Yuny and Renenutet in slide 37); and the food page (stela of a Middle Kingdom official in slide 33).

## • Eating It Up

In slide 33 Mentuwoser's table is piled high with his favorite foods. Ask the students to draw themselves at a table covered with their favorite things to eat. Before they start drawing, ask them to think about how they will arrange the food so that each kind can be clearly seen. When they have finished their artwork, talk about whether they have used the Egyptian convention of putting things one on top of another and avoiding overlapping or whether they have devised other techniques.

## • Art Words

Examine carefully the way the necklace pectoral in slide 17 was designed to form a sentence made up of hieroglyphic signs. Ask each student to draw a design for a necklace or a belt buckle using two or more words, one of which is his or her name.

## • Name Games

An Egyptian king had two especially important names. His throne name identified him as the ruler of Egypt, and his birth name proclaimed him to be the son of Re, the sun god, and therefore the possessor of divine powers. Both names were encircled in cartouches. Ask the students to think of two names they would like to add to their own names such as the Athlete, the Brain, the Whiz, the Star, the Brave, the Beautiful, and so on. Then ask them to design appropriate decorations to frame their two favorite names. Before they sign their artwork, pass the drawings of the framed assumed names to other class members and see if they can guess to whom the assumed names and "cartouches" belong.

## • Draw a Story

Write a brief story using phonograms (letters from our alphabet) for some of the words and ideograms (pictures of the word) for as many words as you can think of.

## • Ask Me an Animal Question

Ask the students to write a riddle about one of the animals illustrated in the slides, such as the hippo, uraeus, Sakhmet/Bastet, or another animal encountered in the Egyptian collection during a museum visit.

## • Animal Symbols

In slide 16 the pharaoh's head is depicted on the body of a lion to symbolize royal power. Ask the students to think of a person they admire, either someone they know or a famous person, and then think of an animal or a combination of animals whose characteristics symbolize the special qualities of that person. Have them draw a picture of the animal or animals and write a description of why the animal/animals symbolize the person they have chosen. You may decide to display the animal pictures and the descriptions separately in the school hallway and challenge other classes to match them up.

To extend the activity, ask the students to draw parts of animals—a lion's paws, a bird's wings, the snout and teeth of a crocodile, the horns of a bull, and so on—and then combine them to form new creatures. What or who could they represent and why?

## • Divine Power

Discuss how divine power differs from human power. Talk about the ways in which people of different cultures have tried to imagine God (in human form, as a powerful animal, as a phenomenon of nature, etc.). Would this ultimate One be illustrated best in one image or with several different forms and shapes?

Ask the students to explain their ideas about picturing divine powers in a drawing, a series of drawings, a collage, or in a short essay. Perhaps their endeavors could be put together to form a class booklet or to create a wall mural.

## • Family Relationships

Ask each student to draw a picture of his or her family using scale (size) to show who are the most important members.

After looking at the scene of Menna and his family fishing and hunting birds along the Nile (slide 36), ask the students to think about their favorite family outing or about a family outing they would like to take. Create a picture of the scene, what happens, who is there, and so on, or write a story about the event.

## • Presentation of Self

To be important and good-looking forever, Yuny and Renenutet (Slide 37) had themselves portrayed wearing fine linen, curled and braided wigs, and sitting upon a chair carved with lion's-paw feet, an obvious symbol of power and wealth. Ask the students about what clothing, adornment, hairstyle, and symbols of glamour and status modern celebrities choose. How would the students portray themselves? What would they wear, what poses would they take, and what symbols would they surround themselves with?

## • Archaeology: Class Discussion

(The questions in the paragraphs below are for the leader of the discussion to refer to only if important points are being missed.)

*What is an archaeologist?*

Archaeologists research the material remains of people; they look for evidence of the past by excavating ancient campsites, towns, sacred places, and burial grounds where people once lived, worked, held religious ceremonies, and were laid to rest. As they dig, archaeologists describe and measure the evidence that is uncovered. To make a permanent record of exactly where objects are found, they take detailed notes and photographs and make plans of the level on which they are digging. Archaeologists do this so that they can reconstruct the context of an object—that is, whether it was found in a house, a grave, a religious building, or a garbage dump and whether it was found by itself or with other objects. Keeping these detailed records is important because as the excavation proceeds, the upper levels are removed so that what lies below can be examined. If the

archaeologists have done their job properly, it should be possible for someone else, even years later, to take their records and on paper re-excavate the site level by level.

*What do archaeologists hope to do with the information and objects they discover?*

As the excavators accumulate more and more evidence, they hope to form at least a partial picture of what life was like at the site. When the excavation is completed, it is the responsibility of archaeologists to publish the site plans, records, descriptions, and interpretations of what was found. By comparing this information with publications of excavations at similar sites, archaeologists and historians gain a better idea of the customs, beliefs, art, and economy of that particular civilization. Thus we all learn more about our ancestors and how they lived in many different parts of the world.

*What is the difference between an archaeologist and a treasure hunter?*

Although treasure hunters and archaeologists both remove objects from the ground (or under water), there are significant differences between them. A treasure hunter, obviously, searches for things that are collectible, such as arrowheads, or pieces with artistic value that might bring a high price on the art market, or objects with intrinsic value, such as gold and silver coins or jewelry made with precious metals and stones. The treasure hunter usually has no interest in the archaeological context of an object or in what the object might tell us about the people who made it. Because this information has no value to them, treasure hunters often toss aside or destroy architectural remains, broken objects, bones, textiles, pots, baskets, and mats.

Archaeologists, on the other hand, are interested in everything they find. A fragment of a loom, because of what it might tell of the technology of a culture, may be as important as a gold ring. Fragments of broken pottery (called sherds) are very important because earthenware pots usually were not used for a long period of time before they broke, and their shape and decoration changed as potters continued to make them. By noting the shape and decoration of the sherds found on each excavation level, archaeologists can set up a chronology of pottery development, and thus assign approximate dates to the other objects and buildings at the site and at other sites occupied by people of the same culture.

## • Art and Culture

Is art an important source of information about civilizations? Explain. Talk about the Egyptian style of depicting the human figure and about the use of human-animal combinations in visualizing Egyptian deities. What does Egyptian art reveal about Egyptian religious beliefs? About their political beliefs? About Egyptian society?

Do political, religious, and social views of our times influence the content and style of contemporary art? If so, in what ways? Is art important today? Ask the students to think about which forms of art mean the most to them.

Compare the most ancient Egyptian artworks in the slides to those made in later times. What do these comparisons suggest about tradition and change in ancient Egypt? With more advanced students, discuss changes in modern art and society that have taken place in the last fifty years. Why is change much more rapid today?

### • Compare, Contrast, and Write

Draw two large overlapping circles. Ask the students to select two works of art illustrated in the resource and write words or phrases that describe each object in one of the two circles. In the space where the circles overlap, describe characteristics the two works of art share.

Using the words in the diagram, ask the students to write a brief essay about the works of art.

### • The Look of Egyptian Art

As a concluding activity, have a class discussion about what looks Egyptian about Egyptian art, what impressed the students, and what their favorite works of art are. This could be a writing activity as well.

## *Poster Activities*

**Coffin set of Henettawy (Poster A)**

### • What Do You See?

Place the poster in a prominent position and start a discussion with your class by asking:

What are these objects?

Why are the coffins shaped the way they are?

Why did the Egyptians think it was important to mummify bodies after death?

What looks Egyptian about them? (Let them observe and say what they see. Do not tell them anything. Probably many students will mention the hieroglyphic script right away. After a few minutes of looking, depending on your students' ages and backgrounds, some may suggest the large outlined eyes and a few may guess that the figures look like Egyptian gods.)

What kinds of things might the hieroglyphs say?

### • You and Eternity

Give the students tracings of the outline of Henettawy's outer coffin (on the left) or have them draw their own outline. Ask them to decorate the surface in symmetrical panels with their own symbols of protection and good fortune. In drawing the face ask them how they would like to appear throughout eternity, what their hairstyle would be, what clothing and adornment they would wear, how

they would pose their hands, and what they would want to be holding. They can then write about what their symbols mean and describe their facial expression and appearance.

## • Gods and Symbols

Assign teams. Ask each to write down:

all the symbols for protection, power, sustenance, and rebirth that they can find on the poster

all the deities they can locate

Have each team share their findings with the whole class.

## • What Do You Think?

What is typically Egyptian about the style and arrangement of the images on the three coffin lids? Are there differences? Explain.

Ask the students why it is interesting to understand the symbolic images on the coffin lids. What other civilizations have used symbols to express ideas important to them? What symbols do we use?

Talk about how the Egyptian painter designed the coffin lids to make it easy for ancient Egyptians (and us) to read the symbolic language (symmetry, figures arranged in "windows" between horizontal and vertical bands, images clearly outlined and painted in colors to contrast with the background, expressive gestures).

Ask the students to point out the many patterns. Then suggest they draw or paint a scene and include in it two or three (or more) patterns that are repeated to create different rhythms.

### Canopic jar lid in the shape of a royal woman's head (Poster B)

## • What Do You See?

What kind of person is this? How can you tell? (elaborate wig, broad collar) How would you describe the surfaces of the stone? Are there contrasts? Explain.

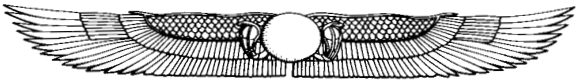
## • What Is Its Function?

(See description of slide 22).

## • What To Create

A Broad Collar, page 140

Presentation of Self, page 143



# Lesson Plans

Here are eight lesson plans based on portions of the text, a selection of slides, appropriate drawings in the text, and (in several instances) the poster. Art and writing activities for the class are included. Other themes from which lesson plans can be developed are on page 65.

**For all grade levels**

Life after Death: Mummies and Magic, page 148
Egyptian Art, page 151

**For elementary students**

Ancient Egyptian Families, page 154

**For elementary and middle-school students**

Art and the Environment, page 156
Animal Symbols, page 158

**For middle-school and high-school students**

Egyptian Gods and Goddesses, page 161
The Role of the King, page 164
Egyptian Art and Writing, page 166

The following five lesson plans focus on art activities related to one, two, or three of the slides and include suggestions for interdisciplinary connections.

**For elementary students (may be adapted for upper grades)**

Personal Adornment/Pendant, page 168

**For all grade levels**

Myths/Architecture/Environment, page 171

**For middle-school and high-school students (may be adapted for lower grades)**

Relief Sculpture/Stasis and Action, page 174

**For elementary students (may be adapted for upper grades)**

Narrative Art/Scroll Painting, page 177

**For the whole school**

Living Work of Art, page 179

## Life after Death: Mummies and Magic

Grade level: **FOR ALL GRADE LEVELS**

For everyone this is the initial fascination with Egyptian civilization.

### Objectives for students

- to find out that by looking at Egyptian tombs, tomb plans, and works of art buried in tombs, one can learn a good deal about Egyptian afterlife beliefs
- for middle-school students, to begin to understand that art reveals the beliefs, values, and world view of a specific culture
- for older students, to know that, in studying history, the art of a nation or civilization is an important primary source for understanding political and religious beliefs

### Visual materials

The visual materials listed below are not in numerical order but rather are in an order that develops the progression of the lesson.

| | |
|---|---|
| Poster: | Coffin set of Henettawy |
| Slide 32: | Coffin of a Middle Kingdom official |
| Slide 22: and poster B | Canopic jar with a lid in the shape of a royal woman's head |
| Slides 11–13: | The discovery of Wah's mummy, unwrapping Wah's mummy, and Wah's jewelry |
| Slides 8–10: | Riverboat, granary, statuette of an offering bearer |
| Slide 3: | Tomb of Perneb |
| Slide 33: | Stela of a Middle Kingdom official |
| Slide 38: | Section from a *Book of the Dead* |

### Advance preparation

Please read the section "Life after Death" on pages 27–29 and the descriptions of the slides and the poster. You may want to photocopy the plan of the tomb of Perneb on page 71 and the plan of Meketre's tomb on page 77 for the students.

Depending upon the students' ages and the time allowed in the curriculum, you may decide to do some or all of the suggested activities and discussions. The questions about the visual materials listed below begin with simple observations followed by those requiring more background information.

## Class discussion

*Begin discussions about the visual materials by asking the students to describe what they see. The additional questions may require background information.*

**Coffin set of Henettawy** (poster): Use as many of the suggested poster discussions and activities on pages 145 and 146 as you think are appropriate for your group.

Compare Henettawy's coffins with the **coffin of a Middle Kingdom official** (slide 32) and talk about the similarities and differences in shape and decoration. What images will protect Khnumnakht?

**Canopic jar with a lid in the shape of a royal woman's head** (slide 22): Ask the students to describe the materials and design of this object. What was its function? What visual clues suggest that the head was that of a royal person?

Then look at the photographs of **the discovery of Wah's mummy** in the coffin (slide 11), which is rectangular like Khnumnakht's, and **unwrapping Wah's mummy** (slide 12) and talk about why **Wah's jewelry** was buried with him (slide 13). Ask the students to think about what kinds of burial rituals and practices people have today.

The **riverboat, granary,** and **statuette of an offering bearer** (slides 8–10) pose the question of why Meketre had wonderful painted wood models of servants and boats for traveling on the Nile placed in his tomb. Besides providing Meketre with food and service in the next life, did these models have deeper meanings?

When looking at the **tomb of Perneb** (slides 2, 3), ask why this Old Kingdom tomb was shaped like a house. Why do many Egyptian tombs have several rooms and hidden spaces?

In the **stela of a Middle Kingdom official** (slide 33), the official's father, son, and daughter are bringing him a feast. Similar scenes of family and servants offering food to the deceased appear in many tombs (Perneb's, for instance). What did the Egyptians believe about these scenes? Why did they have them carved in stone? What kinds of special feasts and food rituals do we celebrate today?

The **section from a *Book of the Dead*** (slide 38): What is happening in the center of the scene? (Look at the scales. Explain the significance of the scene, that Egyptians believed the life of the deceased must be judged before he or she is admitted into the afterlife.) Who is the person sitting on the right? (He is Osiris, ruler in the afterlife.) What indicates he is a ruler? What looks Egyptian about this scene?

## Activities

Look under the following headings in the "Activities" section, pages 139–46, listed here in order of age appropriateness.

A Broad Collar
Costume and Adornment
On the Wall
Favorites Forever
Wrap-ups
Eyewitness News



## Egyptian Art

Grade level: **FOR ALL GRADE LEVELS**

### Objectives (for elementary students)

- to begin to develop an awareness of the arts and their importance
- to learn that art is an important way for people to express their ideas and beliefs about the world
- to begin to express their ideas and feelings about art, using basic art vocabulary

### Objectives (for middle-school students)

- to understand how particular art forms reflect the values, beliefs, and world views of particular cultures
- to express and interpret in the language of the visual arts the content, structure, and meaning of art
- in sharing interpretations about the meaning of the art, to develop language and critical-thinking skills
- to discover that Egyptian beliefs about life after death, the powers of the gods, and the role of the king were communicated visually in forms of art understood by all Egyptians
- to recognize what looks Egyptian about Egyptian art

### Objectives (for high-school students)

- to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of culture on the arts
- to analyze the impact of religious, political, and social views on the content and style of Egyptian art
- to think about how these influences affect the art of our own times
- to reflect upon the ways in which art is important in their own lives and to consider what kinds of art affect them most

### Visual materials

The visual materials listed below are not in numerical order but rather are in an order that develops the progression of the lesson.

Slide 15: Statue of Hatshepsut
Slide 10: Statuette of an offering bearer
Slide 25: West wall from a chapel built by Sety I for his father, Ramesses I
Slide 17: Pectoral of Princess Sithathoryunet
Slide 38: Section from a *Book of the Dead*

Slide 33: Stela of a Middle Kingdom official
Slide 36: Menna and his family fishing and fowling
Slide 3: Tomb of Perneb
Slide 4: The Temple of Dendur
Slide 16: Sphinx of Senwosret III
Slide 27: Statuette of Amun
Poster: Coffin set of Henettawy

## Advance preparation

Read section three, "Egyptian Art," pages 19–58, the description about how to use the slides on page 64, the descriptions of the slides listed above, and the poster description.

Depending upon the age of the group and the time allowed in the curriculum, you may decide to do some or all of the activities and discussions.

The visual materials selected here illustrate the ways in which the formal elements of Egyptian art effectively express the meaning and function of the art (as do all the visual materials in the educators' resource).

The idealized, balanced forms of Egyptian art express the Egyptian desire for order.

The use of durable and valuable materials expresses Egyptian beliefs about eternity.

The keenly observed naturalistic details in the art reveal the Egyptians' love of life.

## Class discussion

Before looking at the slides, ask the students what functions they think art had in Egyptian civilization. What functions does art have today? *Begin discussions about the visual materials by asking the group to describe what they see.*

**Statue of Hatshepsut** (slide 15): Discuss the reaction one has looking at this figure. The seated pose is balanced, formal, and frontal—a pose that could be held forever. It is made of limestone, a material that will endure. To prevent parts of the figure from breaking, the space between the arms and torso was not cut out, nor is the space between the legs. It is a solid image of the monarch that is meant to last forever.

**Statuette of an offering bearer** (slide 10): Is there action here? How would you describe it? Is the figure balanced or off balance? (Like the seated figure of Hatshepsut, this figure is centered and frontal. The pose with the left leg forward is typical of standing figures.)

**West wall from a chapel built by Sety I for his father, Ramesses I** (slide 25): Notice how the gestures help to explain what is happening in this scene. Talk about how, in portraying the human figure, Egyptian artists used different points of view to show each part of the body in its most complete form. Discuss the

composition and how it reflects the concern for order (clear outlines, symmetry, all the figures placed on the same ground line).

**Pectoral of Princess Sithathoryunet** (slide 17): Compare this design with the composition of the relief from the chapel built by Sety I. (A concern for order similar to that in the relief can be seen in the clear gold outlines, symmetry, and ground line.)

**Section from a *Book of the Dead*** (slide 38): Compare with the two previous slides. Notice here how other events believed to befall Nany in the afterlife are organized on a horizontal ground line above the main scene. This arrangement of depicting events in horizontal rows is typical in Egyptian art.

**Stela of a Middle Kingdom official** (slide 33): Notice how the scale of the figures shows who is most important. Talk about the way the carver showed the food offerings.

**Menna and his family fishing and fowling** (slide 36): Identify and talk about the Nile wildlife portrayed and how natural it looks. Also talk about how we can tell right away that this is an Egyptian work of art (clarity, symmetry, the human body depicted using multiple viewpoints, use of scale to show relative importance).

**Tomb of Perneb** (slide 3), **the Temple of Dendur** (slide 4), and the **sphinx of Senwosret III** (slide 16): Why did the Egyptians use stone to create tombs, temples, and statues? Looking at the solids and voids of the tomb and temple, what do you think the basic design unit of Egyptian architecture was? (Notice cubes and rectangles.) Does the shape of the sphinx conform? Explain.

**Statuette of Amun** (slide 27): Why portray the god in gold? (Gold was treasured for its color and sheen, which symbolized the sun. The gods were believed to have golden flesh. Because gold does not tarnish or disintegrate with time, it symbolized eternal life.)

**Coffin set of Henettawy** (poster): Discuss what elements of Egyptian style are seen here (clarity of outline, symmetry, scenes clearly framed and organized horizontally and vertically, pose and style of figures, human and animal combinations, hieroglyphic writing).

## Activities

Look under the following headings in the "Activities" section, pages 139–46.

You as an Egyptian
Body Language
Eating It Up
Art and Culture

# Ancient Egyptian Families

Grade level: **Elementary**

## Objectives for students

- to begin to learn that most people, both in the present and in the past, are part of a family and that family members are interdependent
- to learn that the many images of families in Egyptian tombs show how important the presence of family was to the Egyptians, not only in life but in the afterlife
- to see how artists use gesture and pose to express feelings

## Visual materials

The visual materials listed below are not in numerical order but rather are in an order that develops the progression of the lesson.

Slide 31: Nikare and his family
Slide 37: Yuny and his wife, Renenutet
Slide 36: Menna and his family fishing and fowling
Slide 33: Stela of a Middle Kingdom official
Slide 25: West wall from a chapel built by Sety I for his father, Ramesses I

## Advance preparation

Please read the section "Life after Death" on pages 27–29 and the slide descriptions.

You may want to intersperse some of the class activities listed below with looking at the slides.

## Class discussion

Have a discussion with the students about families, especially their family and families they know. What are the special activities they like to do with their family? This could develop into an art and writing activity.

*Begin discussions about each slide by asking the class to describe what they see.*

Look at **Nikare and his family** (slide 31): observe how the sculptor has shown family dynamics and feelings. Who do you think made most of the important decisions in this particular family? Explain.

Compare Nikare's family group with **Yuny and his wife, Renenutet** (slide 37). Note the styles of wigs and costume. Where is Yuny's right arm? What has the sculptor included to show that this man and woman are husband and wife?

The original scene of **Menna and his family fishing and fowling** (slide 36) was painted directly on a wall of his tomb in the belief that by magic Menna could

enjoy good times with his family forever. Observe how the artist showed family affection and support. What sports do you and your family do together?

In the scene depicted on the **stela of a Middle Kingdom official** (slide 33), the official's family offers him a banquet so that he will continue to have energy in the afterlife. Being remembered by one's family was very important to the ancient Egyptians. How do we remember people in our families who have died (stories of what they did, photos, grave sites, etc.)?

In the scene on the **west wall from a chapel built by Sety I for his father, Ramesses I** (slide 25), both father and son make offerings to the gods so that the spirit of Ramesses I will be protected and nourished forever. The Egyptians believed many of their gods were members of a family (for example, Osiris, Isis, and Horus) who protected and cared for one another. On the right the goddess Isis raises her hands in adoration toward a special symbol of her husband, Osiris, who was believed to be king of the afterlife.

## Activities

Relevant activities are found under the following headings in the "Activities" section, pages 139–46.

Family Relationships
On the Wall (emphasizing family outings and groupings)

# Art and the Environment

Grade level: **Elementary and middle school**

## Objectives for students

- to begin to see how people have adapted to their environment and how it is reflected in their lifestyle and in the content of their art
- to understand the effects of geography on the development and character of a civilization
- to analyze and draw conclusions about the impact of environment on the ancient Egyptian civilization

## Visual materials

The visual materials listed below are not in numerical order but rather are in an order that develops the progression of the lesson.

Pages 29, 33: symbols of Upper and Lower Egypt
Slide 5: View of Luxor looking west across the Nile
Slide 8: Riverboat
Slide 36: Menna and his family fishing and fowling
Slide 35: Hippopotamus
Slide 30: Comb
Slide 17: Pectoral of Princess Sithathoryunet
Slide 1: View of Saqqara
Slide 28: Statuette of the god Anubis
Slide 19: Sakhmet

## Advance preparation

Please read the summary of Egyptian history, the cycles of life, and the role of the gods on pages 7–9 and 19–20, and the section on materials and techniques on pages 53–57.

Photocopy page 33 for the class.

## Class discussion

Have a discussion about how environment affected the Egyptians' world view, lifestyle, and the materials they chose for their artworks.

*Begin discussions about the visual materials by asking the group to describe what they see.*

**Symbols of Upper and Lower Egypt** (page 33)**:** Why were there special symbols for Upper and Lower Egypt? Why did the king wear a crown that combined the crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt? Why did Egypt occasionally dissolve into two kingdoms, one in Upper (southern) Egypt and one in Lower (northern) Egypt?

(The length of the Nile creates different environments as the river moves north toward the Mediterranean Sea: in Upper Egypt the Nile Valley and cultivated area is not very wide, whereas in Lower Egypt the river broadens out in a large fertile and marshy delta.)

**View of Luxor looking west across the Nile** (slide 5): Talk about the three different geographical zones seen in this slide. Which zone was most important for life in Egypt? Which zone was most suited for burial of the dead? In which zone was it easiest to travel? This is what the Nile Valley looks like in Upper Egypt.

**Riverboat** (slide 8): Why was it important to have a boat in Egypt? This boat could also be rigged to sail and would have looked like the boat in slide 5.

**Menna and his family fishing and fowling** (slide 36): Ask the students to identify the wildlife of the Nile marshes pictured here. Which ones were sources of food?

**Hippopotamus** (slide 35): Ask the students what they know about hippopotami and their habits. The ancient Egyptians had conflicting feelings about the hippopotamus. What were they? (Hippopotami can be very dangerous to humans and can consume or trample crops, yet, being creatures of the life-giving Nile, they also symbolized rebirth.)

**Comb** (slide 30): This comb is more than five thousand years old. Ask the class if they can identify the different animals depicted on the comb, all of which lived in Egypt at that time. What animal no longer lives there? (The elephant; the lion and the crocodile, not depicted on the comb, no longer live in Egypt either.)

**Pectoral of Princess Sithathoryunet** (slide 17): Three examples of Egyptian wildlife appear in this elaborate pendant. What are they? Think about the characteristics of each. What does the falcon symbolize? the cobra? the tadpole?

**View of Saqqara** (slide 1): Here is one of the great burial grounds of the ancient Egyptians in the western desert. Why did the Egyptians bury their dead in the desert? (The land closer to their dwelling places along the Nile was cultivated, and so too valuable for the burial of the dead.)

**Statuette of the god Anubis** (slide 28): Ask the class what they know about jackals. Research their characteristics and habitat. The Egyptians believed that Anubis, god of embalming and protector of the deceased, could be symbolized by the jackal. Why? (The jackal, a wild canine, is a nocturnal hunter of the desert. Jackals often could be heard howling and barking at night in or near burial grounds.)

**Sakhmet** (slide 19): Ask the class to think about the animals that lived in the desert surrounding the Nile Valley. In ancient times which was the most powerful and dangerous predator? Why does this goddess have the head of a lioness? What does this mean about her?

## Activities

See the activity Animal Symbols on page 142.

# Animal Symbols

Grade level: **Elementary and middle school**

## Objectives (for younger students)

- to understand that, unlike most modern Americans, the ancient Egyptians lived close to nature, surrounded by the many animal species that inhabited the Nile Valley and surrounding desert. The Egyptians understood the animals' characteristics and admired them, especially those that were dangerous or had powers human beings lacked.
- to learn that in depicting the awesome powers of their gods and kings, the Egyptians often portrayed them as animals or as beautiful humans with animal heads

## Objectives (for older students)

- in addition to the goals for younger students, to learn that artists use symbols to express ideas in visual form
- to recognize that the particular powers of each god were symbolized by animals with similar characteristics
- to understand that Egyptians believed that the gods in their multiple forms revealed the creative and destructive forces of the universe

## Visual materials

The visual materials listed below are not in numerical order but rather are in an order that develops the progression of the lesson.

| | |
|---|---|
| Slide 36: | Menna and his family fishing and fowling |
| Slide 35: | Hippopotamus |
| Poster: | Coffin set of Henettawy |
| Slide 16: | Sphinx of Senwosret III |
| Slide 19: | Sakhmet |
| Slide 29: | Cat |

## Advance preparation

Please be familiar with the slide descriptions, the section "The Role of the Gods" on page 20 and "Naturalistic Details" on page 43, the poster description, and the descriptions of the gods in the glossary.

The activities and discussions based upon these visual materials begin with simple observations and questions followed by more complicated ones.

## Class discussion

Begin the lesson with a discussion about the students' pets and about the characteristics of animals they have seen at zoos, aquariums, and in nature programs on TV.

What kinds of things can animals do that people cannot? Do some animal abilities seem almost magical? Which ones?

Ask the class to make a list of animal symbols we use today (American eagle, names of sports teams, political parties, kinds of cars, etc.).

Ask the class to draw or describe in a short essay an animal or animals that could symbolize the creative powers of nature and those that could symbolize destructive powers.

*Begin the discussion of the visual materials by asking the group to describe what they see.*

**Menna and his family fishing and fowling** (slide 36): How many examples of animal life do they see? (Don't forget the butterflies, birds' eggs, and cat.) Why didn't the artist paint the fish and crocodile under the water?

**Hippopotamus** (slide 35): Ask the class how big a hippo is. Where does it live? What are its characteristics? What did it symbolize to the ancient Egyptians? Besides being a symbol of power and danger, did the hippopotamus have another meaning in Egyptian beliefs?

Ask the class to look closely at the figures on the **coffin set of Henettawy** (poster) and make a list of animals and animal-human combinations. How are these animals different from the other Egyptian animals they have seen? What do they think these beings are? Have a discussion about what a symbol is. What kind of goddess could the one with wings be? What god do the dogs symbolize?

**Sphinx of Senwosret III** (slide 16): Ask the class what kind of individual would want to be portrayed with the body of a lion. What does the lion symbolize?

Compare the slide of the goddess **Sakhmet** (slide 19) with the sphinx. Ask the students what kind of being this is. What does the lioness's head symbolize about this goddess? Why does she have the mane of a male lion?

**Cat** (slide 29; the goddess Bastet): Ask the students to look closely for details. Is this is an ordinary cat? Explain. What kind of characteristics would a cat goddess have? Would she share any characteristics similar to those of the lioness goddess? Why were cats important in ancient Egypt (where most people lived by farming)?

## Activities

Materials: paper marked into 1/2-inch square grids

blocks of plasticine clay for younger students, sculptable self-hardening clay for older students, or poured plaster-of-paris blocks, set but not dry (for ease in carving)

Tools for removing material from the block, spatulas to smooth clay, small pointed instruments for details and texture

Preparation: Prepare blocks of clay or plaster of paris.

Students will carve their own animal or human-animal combination. They might find it helpful to list the qualities they wish their animal to represent.

Demonstrate how to remove clay or plaster with tools. Refer to the Egyptian sculptures in slides 19 and 29 to see how the artist sculpted human and animal forms.

Emphasize that sculptors working in stone or wood had to think carefully before they cut away the material because it cannot be put back on. In a similar fashion, when working in plaster of paris large areas should be cut away first, a little at a time. Then smaller details can be carved. Students working in plasticine may add details with bits of clay, but can also carve into the clay to practice that technique.

If students are sculpting animal-human combinations, remind them how Egyptian sculptors created a believable synthesis by using a headdress or mane to make the transition between body and head.

Additional pertinent activities are found in the "Activities" section, pages 139–46.

Ask Me an Animal Question
Animal Symbols
Divine Power

# Egyptian Gods and Goddesses

Grade level: **Middle school and high school**

## Objectives for students

- to recognize that the animal forms of the gods were based upon real animals living in the Nile Valley and surrounding deserts
- to understand that the Egyptians portrayed their gods in animal and human-animal combinations to symbolize the many kinds of divine power at work in the universe
- to understand the use of symbols, not only to illustrate certain characteristics of a god or person but also to identify that being
- to learn that in past civilizations (as well as in contemporary religions) artists used symbols to fill images with meaning that was understood by the peoples of that time and place

## Visual materials

The visual materials listed below are not in numerical order but rather are in an order that develops the progression of the lesson.

Slide 19: Sakhmet
Slide 29: Cat
Slide 27: Statuette of the god Amun
Slide 10: Statuette of an offering bearer
Poster: Coffin set of Henettawy
Slide 38: Section from a *Book of the Dead*
Slide 39: Magical stela
Slide 4: The Temple of Dendur

## Advance preparation

Read the section "The Role of the Gods," page 20, and the descriptions of the slides with the accompanying suggestions for looking and analyzing. Please be familiar with the descriptions of deities in the glossary. You also may want to photocopy the drawings of the gods on pages 23 and 25 for the students.

The questions for looking at the slides begin with simple observations followed by more detailed ones that involve more background information.

## Class discussion

Discuss the various human and animal forms used to portray Egyptian gods. Why did the Egyptians visualize their gods in these ways?

Ask the students to imagine that they believe a god controls a force of nature essential to life, such as the sun or water. How would they portray that god? How would they identify the god's powers?

*Begin discussions about the visual materials by asking the class to describe what they see.*

**Sakhmet** (slide 19): What is the sculpture made of? What features identify her as a goddess? What do they indicate about her special powers? What does the lioness head tell us? In what mood is the goddess portrayed? How is that mood expressed (pose, expression of face)? What was the function of this sculpture?

**Cat** (slide 29): The goddess Bastet was portrayed as a cat and sometimes as a woman with a cat's head. Are there visual clues showing that this figure of a cat is indeed Bastet and not an ordinary cat? What special powers would a goddess symbolized by a cat have? Why were cats important in a civilization whose livelihood was based upon farming? What is the sculpture made of? What was its function?

Compare the **statuette of Amun** (slide 27) with the figures of Sakhmet and Bastet. Is it different, and if so, in what ways? How might one guess this is a god instead of a king? What is he holding? What do these objects symbolize? What essential force for life on earth does Amun symbolize? What identifies him as Amun (the shape of his crown; the gold, which symbolizes the sun)? What identifying feature is missing? What do scholars think the function of this figure might have been?

**Statuette of an offering bearer** (slide 10): At first this female figure appears to be an ordinary servant, but what details suggest she is much more than that (her adornment, her dress)? How would you describe the patterns of her dress? They are further indications of this figure's importance. In Egyptian art what special women are depicted wearing feathered dresses or headdresses (goddesses, queens)?

**Coffin set of Henettawy** (poster): Use as many of the poster discussions and activities on pages 145 and 146 as you think are appropriate for your group.

**Section from a *Book of the Dead*** (slide 38): Ask the class to describe the scene and identify what is happening. Discuss the meaning and the function of this object, then focus on Osiris, his wife and sister Isis, and his other sister Nephthys, to make the point that many Egyptian gods were believed to live in families.

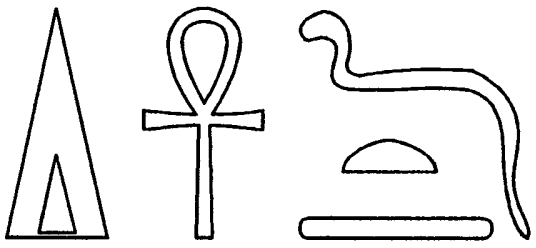
What is the material of the **Magical stela** (slide 39), and how was it made? Who is the main character? How has the artist made him stand out? What could be happening in this scene? How are the other figures in the main scene identified? Have a class member describe the actual narrative referred to here. Look closely at the carving. How was it done? What is the magical function of this stela?

**The Temple of Dendur** (slide 4): Describe the temple and gate. Ask the students what the material is and how the temple was constructed. Talk about the fact that a statue of the god honored in the temple would have been in the sanctuary.

Where would the people worship the god? (A temple was believed to be the house for the god and only the highest priests and the king were allowed inside the temple sanctuary to view the image of the god. The people worshiped the god in the temple's outer courtyard.) Statues of the god in temple sanctuaries were made of precious material; they have not survived. The small gold Amun statuette gives a modest idea of the splendor of materials and craftsmanship that would have been seen in the god statue in a sanctuary.

## Activities

In the section "Activities" see the activity titled Divine Power on page 143 and the pertinent parts of Art and Culture on page 144.



# The Role of the King

Grade level: **Middle school and high school**

## Objectives for students

- to learn that images of Egyptian kings were identified by special symbols, costume, and materials
- in a wider sense, to understand that in many civilizations around the world rulers, religious leaders, and other elite members of society were identified in art and ceremonies by particular adornment

## Visual materials

The visual materials listed below are not in numerical order but rather are in an order that develops the progression of the lesson.

Slide 15: Statue of Hatshepsut
Slide 20: Fragment of the head of a queen
Slide 21: Akhenaten sacrificing a duck
Slide 25: West wall from a chapel built by Sety I for his father, Ramesses I
Slide 23: Tutankhamun wearing the blue crown
Slide 18: Fragment of a battle scene
Slide 16: Sphinx of Senwosret III
Slide 17: Pectoral of Princess Sithathoryunet

## Advance preparation

Read the descriptions and discussion points for the slides listed below; the sections "Order over Chaos: The Role of the King" and "The King in Art," pages 29–31; and the hieroglyphic phrases frequently used for royalty, page 51. You may want to photocopy the royal regalia and symbols of Upper and Lower Egypt on pages 33 and 35 for your class.

Depending upon the students' age and the time allowed in the curriculum, you may decide to do some or all of the activities. The questions for looking at each of the slides begin with simple observations followed by more complicated ones.

## Class discussion

In the present day what things, worn and held, identify national and world leaders? What symbols and adornment identify sports, film, and rock stars?

*Begin discussion about each slide by asking the students to describe what they see.*

**Statue of Hatshepsut** (slide 15): Mention the size of the figure and the material. Ask the class how they know it is a royal statue (formal pose and throne). What royal symbols can they see in the slide?

**Fragment of the head of a queen** (slide 20): What indicates that this is the head of a royal person? Why must it be the head of a queen rather than a king? Why is it assumed that the rest of the statue was made of other materials?

**Akhenaten sacrificing a duck** (slide 21): What is distinctive about this portrayal of a king? What is distinctive about the action? the style? the carving? How many hands are there in this scene? Why was it important that the king should make frequent sacrifices to the gods?

**West wall from a chapel built by Sety I for his father, Ramesses I** (slide 25): Notice the figures' poses, gestures, and costumes. Which are kings? Which are gods? What do the poses of the kings indicate? Who are the gods (Isis, Horus)? Why would the kings make offerings to these two particular deities?

**Tutankhamun wearing the blue crown** (slide 23): What identifies the head in this fragment as that of a king? Describe the size of the head and what the complete sculpture portrayed. How can we guess what the original looked like? What could the hand of Amun-Re resting on the king's head signify?

In your discussion of the **fragment of a battle scene** (slide 18) mention the colors and what the complete scene would have been. How did the artist show the confusion of battle? Is there another level of meaning in scenes of the king defeating his foes?

**Sphinx of Senwosret III** (slide 16): Ask what it is made of and what the meaning of this human and animal combination is. This will initiate a discussion about animal symbolism. Why a lion? What royal symbol is missing from the king's headdress? Why a cobra's head reared as if to attack?

**Pectoral of Princess Sithathoryunet** (slide 17): Ask for descriptions of the materials. Describe what a pectoral is and the size of this one. What do the two falcons symbolize? Why is the falcon an appropriate symbol for the sun god? What other parts of the design symbolize royalty? Talk about how the design is both art and writing.

## Activities

Ask the students to draw a picture or write about the kind of headdress they would wear if they were king or queen. What symbols of protection and power would they include? The headdresses could be three-dimensional designs as well.

See the activity Art Words on page 142.

# Egyptian Art and Writing

Grade level: **Middle school and high school**

## Objectives for students

- to understand that peoples past and present have developed many different forms of writing
- to realize the importance of having a writing system to circulate and record a culture's ideas, beliefs, and history
- to begin to understand that most of the figures of humans and animals in Egyptian art are actually larger forms of those in hieroglyphic writing
- to learn that in the ancient Egyptian language the same word is used for writing, drawing, and painting, and that the images created in these three disciplines were thought to possess magical powers

## Visual materials

The visual materials listed below are not in numerical order but rather are in an order that develops the progression of the lesson.

| | |
|---|---|
| Slide 30: | Comb |
| Slide 16: | Sphinx of Senwosret III |
| Slide 33: | Stela of a Middle Kingdom official |
| Slide 38: | Section from a *Book of the Dead* |
| Poster: | Coffin set of Henettawy |
| Slide 17: | Pectoral of Princess Sithathoryunet |
| Slide 39: | Magical stela |

## Advance preparation

Read the section "Hieroglyphs and Egyptian Art" on pages 47–51 and the descriptions for the slides and poster.

## Class discussion

Have a discussion about writing. Is it important? Why? What do we learn from writing? What can we learn without it? What would our lives be like without it? What can writing tell us about past civilizations?

Ask the students to try to recall picture books they had before they learned to read. How were they able to follow the story? Can you think of important civilizations that did not develop written communication? Can we learn about their beliefs and lifestyles even though they left no written records? Explain.

What does the term "prehistoric" mean?

*Begin the discussion of the visual materials by asking the group to describe what they see.*

**Comb** (slide 30): Talk about the way the animals are arranged. Where is the beginning and where is the end of the procession? Notice that the figures appear in rows similar to hieroglyphic writing. In which direction are hieroglyphs read? Some people think the comb might show an early attempt to record a story or myth before hieroglyphic writing was developed.

**Sphinx of Senwosret III** (slide 16): Talk about the face of the king. (The careworn features are as close to real portraiture as one finds in Egyptian art. Usually the faces are young and idealized.) According to Egyptian beliefs, what identifies the statue or painting of an individual is not a physical likeness but the person's name written or inscribed on the surface. Locate Senwosret's name (beneath the royal beard).

**Stela of a Middle Kingdom official** (slide 33): Look closely at the hieroglyphs. In which direction (or directions) should they be read? Can you make out animal and bird forms? Do any of the human forms resemble the poses of the official's family? Knowing something about Egyptian afterlife beliefs, what do you think the function of this relief was and what is the text about?

**Section from a *Book of the Dead*** (slide 38): Talk about the hieroglyphs above the figures' heads. What could they be? (Like balloons in a cartoon, they are the words of Osiris, Nany, and Anubis and explain in detail what is happening.)

**Coffin set of Henettawy** (poster): What is the purpose of the hieroglyphs here (identification, spells for protection and sustenance)?

**Pectoral of Princess Sithathoryunet** (slide 17): Here it is very clear that the writing is art and the art is writing. Explain the meaning of each figure. (Together they form a magic wish that the princess's father will have eternal life.)

**Magical stela** (slide 39): Both word and image had magic powers according to Egyptian beliefs. Describe the function of the stone carving. (As water was poured over the surface, which is inscribed with magic spells and the images of gods, it was believed to absorb their curative powers and become transformed into a powerful medicine.)

## Activities

See the following headings in the "Activities" section, pages 139–46:

Art Words
Draw a Story

# Personal Adornment/Pendant

Grade level: **Elementary. Materials may be adapted for upper grades.**

## Objectives for students

- to see how personal adornment reflects the ideas, beliefs, and views of Egyptian culture
- to create a pendant to communicate their own observations, ideas, feelings, and experiences

## Visual materials

Photocopies of hieroglyph pages (optional)

Slide 17: Pectoral of Princess Sithathoryunet

## Advance preparation

Read the information about slide 17 and the section "Artists and Materials."

You may wish to wear a noticeable piece of jewelry, especially a necklace or pin that has symbolic or sentimental meaning.

## Class discussion

Describe the piece of jewelry you have chosen to wear to begin the discussion. Ask students about any special jewelry that they or their family might own: antique pocket watch; wedding, engagement, or class rings; a souvenir charm from a vacation, and so on. Ask for volunteers to describe one of these pieces of jewelry, including its design and materials.

Discuss the symbolism behind jewelry design and materials—a ring symbolizes eternity, "diamonds are forever." Shamrocks, peace signs, crosses, and Stars of David also all have symbolic meaning.

Jewelry is worn for many reasons. It may contain a message from the giver and therefore would be worn for sentimental reasons. Jewelry also reflects power and prestige; crowns and tiaras are worn for this reason.

Show the slide of Sithathoryunet's pectoral and ask students to describe what they see. Provide information about its age, materials, and symbolism. If students have already studied hieroglyphs and their meaning, they will be able to identify some of them. If not, "read" the pendant to the class.

Discuss who owned the pendant and who made it. Why would the pendant be buried with the princess? What can you tell about the craftsman from looking at the pendant? Explain the process of cloisonné.

## Activity

Materials: heavy gold craft foil, cut into pendant-size rectangles
paper for sketching, the same size as the foil rectangles
scissors
glitter pens, yarn, beads
pencils

Preparation: Precut paper and gold foil into rectangular shapes. Cut tabs or punch holes at the top of foil for younger children.

Explain that students will have the chance to create their own pendants with symbolic meaning. They may chose Egyptian hieroglyphs, symbols of their own, or a combination of both.

Demonstrate how to choose a series of symbols that embody a message. Show how they can be sketched and combined into a design that fits into the shape and size of a piece of gold foil. If desired, demonstrate how a symmetrical design can be made by drawing half the image, then folding it over and tracing the other side. Leave room for two or three tabs on the top of the pendant so that it can be attached to a cord.

Lay the completed sketch over the gold foil and outline the shapes by pressing hard with a pencil. Remove the paper and go over the lines again to deepen them, if desired.

Fill in the shapes with pieces of colored yarn, beads, or glitter pens.

Students with access to enamel kilns may wish to cut their pendant shapes from copper and apply enamel colors. Pendants also can be cut from sheets of silver or other metal.

When the pendant is complete, cut a piece of yarn long enough to go around the neck and attach the pendant by folding the tabs back over the yarn or by inserting yarn through punched holes. If beads are available, string a few on each side of the pendant and tie the two ends of the yarn together so that the pendant hangs at the desired length.

## Connections

Language Arts: Have students write out the message of their pendant on a separate piece of paper. Can students match each message to the proper pendant?

Science: Discuss the techniques of metalworking that the Egyptians used to make precious objects, such as Sithathoryunet's pectoral. Look at actual examples of cloisonné, if any are available, and talk about what scientific principles the artisan would have needed to know.

Social Studies: Look at slide 13, Wah's jewelry, and discuss the role of jewelry to the ancient Egyptians, both that worn during life and jewelry for burial.

## Myths/Architecture/Environment

Grade level: **Adaptable for all grade levels, but especially good for students in global studies programs**

### Objectives for students

- to gain competence in using three-dimensional art media
- to demonstrate how art forms reflect the beliefs, ideas, and views of ancient Egypt
- to participate in group production and exhibition of an "Egyptian temple"
- to create and decorate a temple to represent a particular environment and possible myths associated with it

### Visual materials

Slide 4: The Temple of Dendur
Slide 5: View of Luxor looking west across the Nile
Slide 14: Discovery of fragments of Hatshepsut's sculpture, Thebes

### Advance preparation

Read the information accompanying slides 4, 5, and 14, as well as "Cycles of Life."

### Class discussion

Discuss the word "environment" and ask students to describe their own environment (city, country, small town, etc.). List some of the features of the environment on the board (geographical features, weather, trees, plants, animals, etc.). Discuss what materials were used for building in this environment—wood, stone, bricks, sod, adobe. How does the architecture of a region reflect its natural resources? Buildings today can be made of many different materials, not necessarily reflecting the natural resources of the region. In fact, they tend to look alike and anonymous throughout the country because of this.

Environment not only affects the architecture of a region, it also shapes the beliefs and ideas of cultures. This is often evident in creation myths, legends from a particular culture of how the earth came to be.

Show slide 5, **view of Luxor looking west across the Nile.** What natural features can students identify? Can they see the cultivated land, the water, the desert, and the sky? Which of these seems to be dominant? How might this affect the mythology of the area? What materials could be used for buildings and temples? Explain how the cliffs and hills are tunneled with tombs. There is even a mortuary temple at the base of the cliffs (slide 14).

Briefly describe the Egyptian myth of creation as presented in "Cycles of Life." Ask students to note various features, such as the Nile River, the earth and its vegetation, the sky and the movement of the sun across it.

Look at slide 4, **the Temple of Dendur.** Ask students how this temple might relate to the environment in which it was created. It is made of sandstone, and the outer walls are carved in sunk relief. The brilliant Egyptian sun would strike the edges of the reliefs, creating crisp shadows to make them stand out clearly. The inner walls are carved in raised relief, which is easier to see in indirect light. Students may notice that the two columns on the porch are like stalks of papyrus. The reliefs are arranged in horizontal bands on the walls, much like the horizontal arrangement of the landscape elements in slide 5.

The temple is covered with symbols of the earth, sky, and water, and was an image of the natural world as the Egyptians knew it. Discuss how the figures of the king and the gods and goddesses are identified, even though they might be difficult to see in the slide itself. Identify which symbols are associated with gods or goddesses.

## Activity

Materials: boxes of various sizes and shapes
glue
scissors
cardboard pieces
cardboard rolls
paint or markers
construction paper

Preparation: Begin in advance to collect boxes, cardboard rolls, and flat pieces of cardboard.

Prepare several note cards that describe different environments, one card for each group of four or five students. These can include other regions studied, such as rain forest, desert, tundra, grasslands, etc. Include as much information as is appropriate for the age group.

The teacher may wish to give a brief demonstration of how paper can be manipulated into three-dimensional shapes through folding and cutting techniques: rolling into columns, accordion-folding, cutting doors and windows, and so on.

Divide students into groups of four to five and give each group an index card that identifies a particular environment. Students should collaboratively discuss the features of that particular environment and list or sketch ideas for a temple that reflects it. They will need to think about materials available for building the temple, weather conditions, and decorative elements drawn from plants and animals of the region. Older students can concentrate on the symbolism and deities that might be present in such a region, using their knowledge of global studies.

As students come up with a plan for their temple, they may select boxes, cardboard, and other materials to begin building the structure. Decorative details can be added with colored construction paper, markers, or paint. Older students may wish to have geography books or magazines on hand for reference.

## Connections

Language Arts: Ask students to write a creation myth from the region of their particular temple. Local deities should be identified with the environment, its animals and plants, weather, natural features, and so on. Display the written myths with the finished temples.

Social Studies: Read and compare myths from different parts of the world. How are they alike and how are they different? How do they relate to the environment? Which cultures have flood myths?

Did the ancient Egyptians attempt to control their environment? The story of how the Metropolitan came to own the Temple of Dendur is connected with the construction of the Aswan High Dam in Egypt. What other public projects to harness the environment can students identify?

If possible, take a field trip to see the Temple of Dendur at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, or go to a museum with an Egyptian collection.

Science: Discuss the ecology of the Nile and the animals that lived in ancient Egypt, using the information in "Cycles of Life," "The Role of the Gods," "Representation of Deities in Art," and "Naturalistic Details."

Write a paragraph describing observations of a particular environment, perhaps one you visited on a vacation. What was the weather like? What did you notice about the animals, the rocks, the sand, or the trees? Was the sky an unusual color, or were the clouds different from what you are used to?

Math: Discuss the geometric forms that were used in the design and building of the Temple of Dendur and the class-activity temples.

Music/Drama/Dance: Students may wish to dramatize their myths and present them to the class. This could be done in a variety of ways, through music and dance, dramatic readings, pantomime, or skits.

## Relief Sculpture/Stasis and Action

Grade level: **Middle school and high school. May be adapted for lower grades.**

### Objectives for students

- to gain competence in using art media and processes to create a relief
- to see how artists use certain lines and shapes to express balance and order or action
- to create a relief sculpture showing both stasis and action
- to recognize the styles of carved reliefs produced in ancient Egypt

### Visual materials

The visual materials listed below are not in numerical order but rather are in an order that develops the progression of the lesson.

Slide 25: West wall from a chapel built by Sety I for his father, Ramesses I
Slide 18: Fragment of a battle scene
Slide 21: Akhenaten sacrificing a duck

### Advance preparation

Read and be familiar with the information about slides 18, 21, and 25, as well as the information under "Form of the Art."

### Class discussion

Show the **west wall from a chapel built by Sety I for his father, Ramesses I** (slide 25). Review the poses and gestures of the figures in this relief. Look for the strong horizontal and vertical elements as well as the triangular composition. Discuss how the poses and arrangement of the figures on the left side of the scene are nearly identical to those on the right. How does this balanced composition reflect Egyptian beliefs about permanence and eternity as well as about maintaining order over chaos?

Discuss poses that show action in a scene. Ask volunteers to pantomime a scene. From time to time have the volunteers "freeze" the action and point out the different lines formed by bodies, arms, and legs. Then ask volunteers to take poses that would be good in a quiet scene. Have students make some quick sketches of the poses and gestures that create action or a sense of quiet.

Look at the **fragment of a battle scene** (slide 18) and **Akhenaten sacrificing a duck** (slide 21)—at the same time, if possible—and look for elements that indicate action. In the battle scene, students may notice diagonal and curved lines, overlapping and tangled shapes, and the expressive hands and mouths of the fallen soldiers. In slide 21, Akhenaten's arms are held diagonally and his hands are twisted to show the movement involved in holding on to a struggling duck.

Discuss the details: the beards and mustaches of the Asiatic warriors, the fingers of Akhenaten's hand holding the duck. Are these scenes similar to the depiction in slide 25? How are they different?

Discuss the two techniques of relief carving, raised and sunk. How are they different? Which kind of relief did the ancient Egyptians use for the outside of temples? Which did they usually use inside? (Think about sunlight and dark interiors.)

## Activity

Materials: plasticine clay
self-hardening clay, or plaster of paris poured into Styrofoam meat trays
tools to cut into the clay or plaster, pointed instruments, old dental tools, clay tools

Preparation: If plaster of paris is being used, prepare by pouring it into Styrofoam meat trays and allowing it to set until hard but not dry for ease in carving. Plasticine or self-hardening clay should be rolled out into slabs.

Students may create their own scene involving a number of figures in both static and active poses—a sports event with spectators or a performer with an audience, for example. A composition on paper should be produced first that should be the same size and shape as the slab of clay or plaster.

When the sketch is completed, lay it on top of the plaster or clay slab and trace the lines with a sharp pencil or stylus to make indentations on the surface below. Remove the sketch and use the stylus to carefully deepen the lines around the forms.

Cut away either the background around the forms or the inside of the forms themselves, depending on whether a raised or sunk relief is desired. Work carefully to keep the relief about the same depth throughout, about a quarter of an inch.

Allow the relief to dry thoroughly and display. Raised reliefs may be painted in flat colors, if desired.

This is a good activity for middle-school students who are ready for more complicated techniques.

Younger students will enjoy posing for the sketches. Older students may wish to take a little more time on this preliminary step so that they have specific poses that they can refer to when composing their drawing.

## Connections

Language Arts: Have students make a list of words describing what is going on in the relief they made. Use these words to create an expressive paragraph to display with the relief sculpture.

| | |
|---|---|
| Science: | Look at slides 25 and 26 and discuss how the environment affects buildings and their architectural details over time. How is this evident in the students' own environment? What can be done to prevent or repair damage? Does the museum have a role in conserving and protecting works of art? Explain. |
| Social Studies: | Discuss the symbolic aspects of these two reliefs. How do they depict the power of the king? How do other cultures symbolize power through art? |
| Music/Dance/Drama: | Develop a pantomime or dramatic sketch based on what is happening in the relief sculptures, either the slides or those the students created. |

# Narrative Art/Scroll Painting

Grade level: **Elementary. May be adapted for upper grades.**

## Objectives for students

- to recognize some of the unique features of Egyptian art
- to acquire some knowledge about intentions and social contexts of Egyptian art
- to create their own narrative scroll, communicating a story through visual images

## Visual material

Slide 38: Section from a *Book of the Dead*

## Advance preparation

Be familiar with the information about slide 38 and the section "Form of the Art."

## Class discussion

Discuss how stories can be told in a variety of ways, through pictures, words (written or spoken), television, movies, dance, sign language, and so on. Ask students to identify some stories that they have read themselves, stories that their parents have made up or told from memory, or television programs, movies, or plays they might have seen.

Explain that artists in many cultures are narrators. Their creations have symbolic, religious, or magical meaning, and the story they tell in art speaks to us across the years and gives us information about the people to whom it had meaning.

Show the **section from a *Book of the Dead*** (slide 38). Ask students to look for the main character or characters. What is going on in the scene? After discussing the story depicted, read students the information accompanying the slide. Explain that some of the deities are depicted by their symbol; for example, Thoth, god of wisdom and writing, is a baboon.

Discuss how the test of Nany's life on earth is a very important reflection of Egyptian belief in an afterlife. Explain that this scene is the central one in a scroll that is about seventeen feet long. There are other scenes showing Nany's arrival in the afterlife and what her existence in the afterlife will be like.

What features of Egyptian art can be identified in this painting? Students may notice that the figures are represented partly in profile and partly from the front. Students may also notice that the figures are arranged in registers or horizontal rows, almost like written narratives. Inscriptions of what is being said by the main characters accompany the figures.

## Activity

Materials: 6 x 18-inch piece of construction paper (12 x 18-inch, cut in half lengthwise)
crayons, markers, or paints
rulers or straightedges

Preparation: Precut paper into long strips.

Explain that students will have a chance to create their own picture-story showing events in sequence like an Egyptian scroll. First they should write their story in three sentences, one giving the beginning, one the middle, and one the end of their story.

Placing the paper horizontally on their desks, they should work from left to right and draw their story along the bottom of the paper. They may use rulers to divide the scroll into registers if they wish. (Nany's scroll was written and illustrated from right to left. Why?)

Remind students of symbols and inscriptions they may wish to incorporate into their stories.

Older students may go more deeply into the afterlife beliefs of ancient Egypt and the political climate that inspired the creation and burial of such scrolls. Since this is a very dramatic scene, highlighting an intense moment of confrontation and decision, they may wish to create a similarly dramatic narrative scene.

## Connections

Language Arts: Have students write out their stories in narrative form and display them with the scrolls.

Science: This scroll was made from papyrus. Research how papyrus was made and used by the Egyptians. How did such a fragile medium survive over thousands of years? Paper is made today for a variety of uses: newspapers, textbooks, library books, paperbacks, scholarly texts. Is the same paper made for all these purposes? How does its use affect its need to be made permanent?

Social Studies: Many religions of the present and past incorporate an afterlife where individuals are judged by their lives on earth. What other religions believe in an eternity based on one's deeds and activities? Are there any features in common, for example, truthfulness or doing good works?

Music/Dance/Drama: Dramatize the story of Nany's ordeal before Osiris. Using the visual materials and classroom activities in the resource guide, create costumes, jewelry, and masks. Paint a mural backdrop to represent the papyrus background.

# Living Work of Art

Grade level: **This activity, which evolves from the "Eyewitness News" performing and writing activity on page 141, may be adapted for the whole school as part of an in-depth study of the art of ancient Egypt.**

## Objectives for students

- to participate in group production and exhibition of a play, demonstrating the ability to work cooperatively and collaboratively
- to recognize some of the unique features of Egyptian art, its intentions and social contexts
- to use visual arts to integrate ideas and enrich and facilitate understanding and communication in interdisciplinary studies

## Visual material

Slide 38: Section from a *Book of the Dead*

## Advance preparation

Classes should be assigned different tasks, each relating to the art. Some groups can research and create costumes and jewelry, others the sounds or musical backgrounds, others can prepare a backdrop, props, write the script, or be the actors.

Parents can be recruited to help with the set, the curtains, lighting, and so on, if the production is presented on a stage.

Teachers might want to schedule the presentation for the school board, parent/teacher meeting, or school assembly.

## Class discussion

Explain to the classes that they will be interpreting a scene in a **section from a *Book of the Dead*** (slide 38). This project will draw on many different disciplines—dance, drama, music, language arts, art, math, science, and social studies—and will be a class play or school assembly.

For each element of the production, there must be people working collaboratively. Jobs must be assigned and deadlines set. It may be helpful to keep track of what is being done on a large timeline on the wall of each classroom.

Students should look at slide 38, read about the art, discuss it, and decide how the scene should be presented, for example, from the point of view of an archaeologist finding the tomb or of a visitor to a museum looking at the section of the papyrus, or from the perspective of Nany herself. Time should be set aside to rehearse collaboratively with other classes that are involved.

## Activity

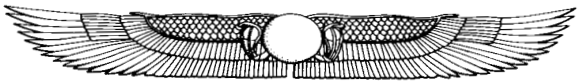
The backdrop should depict the scene from the slide, but without figures, who will be represented by actors. It may be painted or constructed from pieces of colored paper, but it needs to be fairly large.

A script must be written for the actors, and they will rehearse and learn their lines. Students may wish to have a narrator explain the action and give background information, and they may wish to present additional information about this particular piece of Egyptian art through other points of view, for example, an archaeologist or a visitor to a museum.

The dramatic presentation can be videotaped and saved as a resource for other classes studying Egyptian art, or it can be done on a small scale in a classroom to culminate study of a unit on Egyptian art.

## Connections

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|---|---|
| Art: | Students will research a work of art, utilizing its historical context and their response to it to communicate and interpret that work of art to a larger audience. |
| Language Arts: | The writing of the script will reflect the students' understanding of the papyrus and its symbolic meaning. |
| Science: | Depending on the approach that the class chooses for the production, science connections may be made to the materials of the book or its preservation. |
| Social Studies: | Students will draw upon their knowledge of the culture, religion, gods and goddesses, afterlife beliefs, and burial customs of the ancient Egyptians in writing, staging, and performing the production. |
| Music/Dance/Drama: | These disciplines are represented in writing, choreographing, and scoring the production, as well as in performance. Students will be called upon to create music and dances based on their study of the art of ancient Egypt. |



# PLEASE SEND US YOUR COMMENTS

Let us hear from you. Your responses to this Resource for Educators are very important to us as we plan future publications.

1. Which sections are most useful in your curriculum?

2. Which sections are most helpful to you as the educator?

3. Which sections interest your students the most?

4. If planning a museum visit, which themes and visual materials are helpful?

5. What information and visual materials would you like to see in future teacher publications?

6. Other comments

Write a letter or e-mail us your ideas. Please include the grade and subject you teach.


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**Thank you for your time!**

